Commentary

Volume Fifty-nine, Number Six, June 1975

The New Despotism
ROBERT A. NISBET

The Exposed American Jew
NATHAN GLAZER

TRANSLATING THE ANCIENTS
David Stern

MAHLER FOR MODERNS
Eva Hoffman

A STORY
Daniel Fuchs

LIBERALS & LIBERTARIANS
Milton Himmelfarb

BOOKS IN REVIEW:
Robert Alter / Roger Starr / James Atlas / A. J. Sherman / Gerald Strauss / Michael Novak

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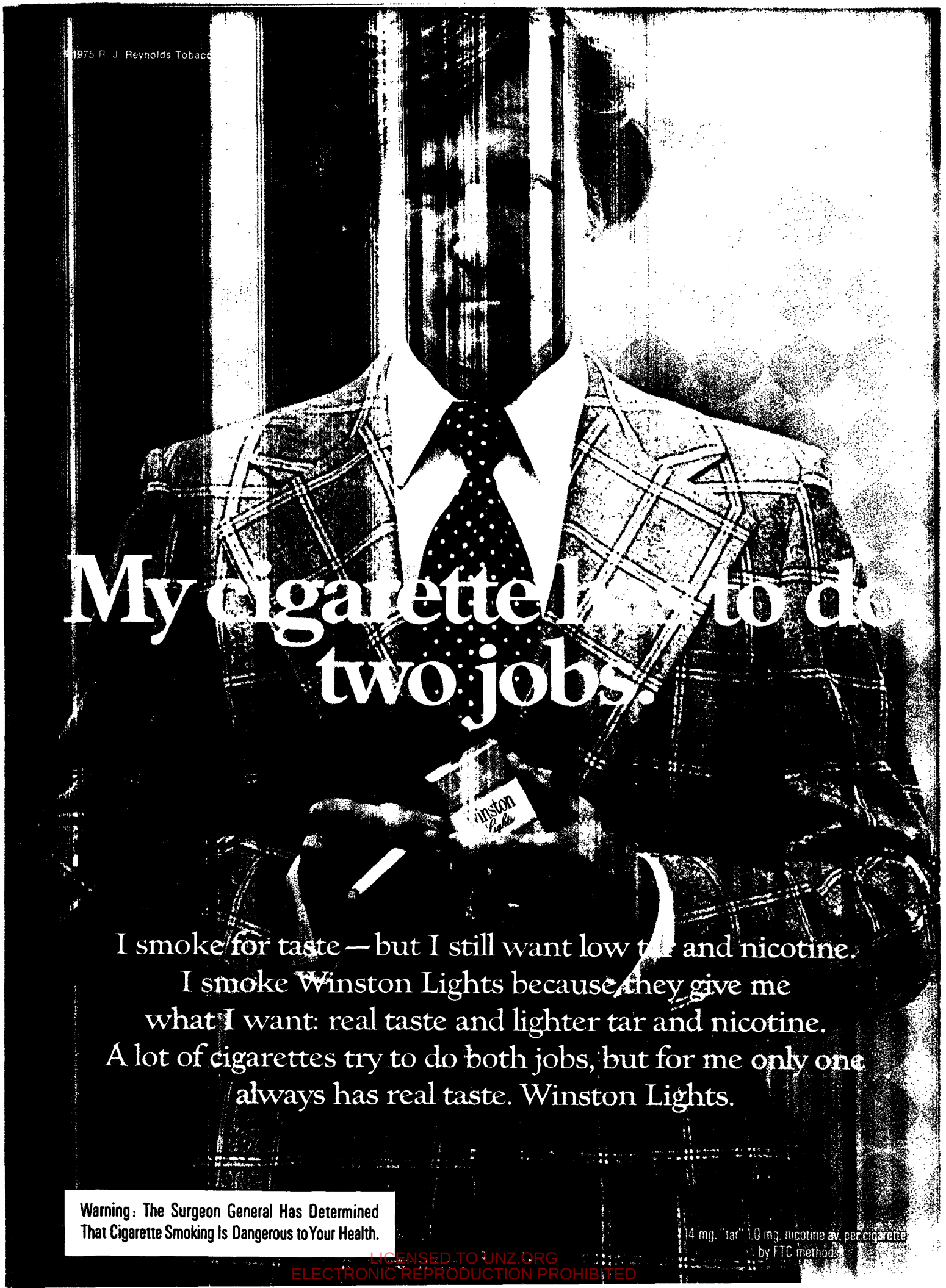
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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

The Future of Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In reviewing my book, *Peace in the Middle East?* [Books in Review, February], Edward Grossman was dealing with material that he finds offensive and objectionable. He tried, with partial success, to be fair in his comments, and is to be commended for that. But there are, to borrow his terms, some "extended and crucial lapses" in which he "violates his intellectual's responsibility to a standard of truthfulness." Most of his strictures are too vague for comment. In a few cases he does attempt to back up what he says. I will keep to these, dismissing the rest.

The most revealing of Mr. Grossman's lapses appears in his comments on a paragraph describing a possible distant future "based on the fundamental principle, already cited, 'that whatever the number of the two peoples may be, no people shall dominate the other or be subject to the government of the other.'" According to Mr. Grossman, this description, which he quotes, bears a "remarkable similarity" to Arafat's UN speech and "chills much like Arafat's" version. The first of these claims is plainly false. The description he quotes includes Jewish "self-governing national institutions" and the right of Jews to return to their "national homeland." Arafat's, crucially, does not. Furthermore, Mr. Grossman neglects to mention that every essential element in the picture that so offends him is drawn from the mainstream of Zionism—not a small oversight. The cited "fundamental principle" is quoted from Nahum Sokolov as he was elected President of the World Zionist Organization in 1931. The remainder of the paragraph reiterates the critique of a possible Jewish state by Ruppin, Katznelson, Ben-Gurion, and other Zionist leaders whom I cite. Thus the vision that Mr. Grossman finds so chilling—"a modest proposal," no less—is not Arafat's. Rather it is that of a major component of pre-war Left-liberal Zionism. There were, of course, those who found this picture as offensive as Mr. Grossman does; namely, the extreme right-wing elements who left the Zionist Organization over the issue.

The world has changed greatly since that time, and will change again. Still, the traditional Zionist principles that arouse Mr. Grossman's horror have not lost their essential validity and may suggest the way toward a better future. One may agree with this judgment or not, but it is hardly honest to characterize these explicit references to a major element in classical Zionist thought merely as "remarkably similar" to Arafat, with no mention whatsoever of their actual source.

The reader will discover that most of what Mr. Grossman finds so chilling in the paragraph he quotes is merely a reiteration of normal principles that are unquestioned (as principles, that is) in any democratic society. This observation brings me to a second major lapse in Mr. Grossman's account. He states that "Chomsky becomes assertive, cavalier with proofs and definitions, if not yet polemical, whenever he confronts the fact, ugly to him, that Israel is a national community where Jews are the majority." Thus I judge Israel "by different standards from those applied to other nations" (as is done "universally," he claims).

These statements are all false. Far from regarding it as an ugly fact that "Israel is a national community" with a Jewish majority, I discuss the fact that Israel is plainly not a national community at all, a matter to which I will return directly. I nowhere express the slightest objection to a Jewish majority in Israel, nor do I argue that Jews should not be a national community there—on the contrary, I insist throughout that they should be. I never judge Israel by other than universal standards. Mr. Grossman is misrepresenting the following observations: (1) "If a state [with non-Jewish citizens] is Jewish in certain respects, then in these respects it is not democratic"; (2) "If the respects are marginal and merely symbolic . . . the departure from democratic principle is not serious. If the respects are significant, the problem is correspondingly severe"; (3) in Israel, the "respects" are significant. I emphasize that the general points (1) and (2) hold as well of an "Arab state," a "white state," etc.

Mr. Grossman does not take

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issue with the factual statement (3); fortunately, because it is true. The source of his complaints is that I barely defend the conceptual points (1) and (2). He is correct in observing that I did not argue these trivial points. I failed to appreciate the irrationality of American Zionist opinion, and therefore presented the truisms (1) and (2) without troubling to elaborate. It has been interesting to see how reviewers have attempted to evade the obvious. Mr. Grossman's method, as just noted, is to attribute to me views that I reject while ignoring what I actually say.

Democratic principle requires that citizens be equal before the law, that the state be the state of its citizens, not of some privileged class of citizens. But Israel is not the state of its citizens, even in principle. It is not "a national community where Jews are the majority," but a "Jewish state," something quite different. Israel within the green line has an Arab minority of close to 15 per cent. But, as the courts have consistently held: "The state of Israel was established and recognized as the state of the Jews . . . this is the sovereign state of the Jewish people" (Eichmann trial judgment). And as the courts held elsewhere in a decision that I cite: "There is no Israeli nation apart from the Jewish people, and the Jewish people consists not only of the people residing in Israel but also of the Jews in the Diaspora." Correspondingly, there is a complex of legal structures, quasi-official bodies operating in the name of the Jewish people, discriminatory administrative practices, and so on, which function so as to guarantee Jewish domination and privilege.

As Mr. Grossman's own remarks make clear, it is he, not I, who insists that Israel be judged by unique standards. Thus he regards the truisms (1) and (2) as being somehow inapplicable to Israel, and fulminates over the fact that I apply them to Israel as to any other state. He alleges that by citing universally applicable standards (1) and (2) and noting the facts in Israel (3) I am implying that Israel has no "right to exist." The conclusion is his, not mine. I reject it. Israel has the same right to exist as other discriminatory states; and furthermore, it might evolve to overcome the fundamental departure from democratic principle, thus losing its character as a "Jewish state," except perhaps in symbolic respects, though it must be admitted that this would require radical changes in institutions and ideology for which there is, at present, virtually no support. Or, Israel might evolve, perhaps jointly with a Palestinian state, in directions indicated by the Left-liberal Zionist critique of the notion of a "Jewish state," which I discuss, a possibility that is no less remote.

Mr. Grossman's further comments reveal clearly how his critique applies to himself, though not to me. Thus he argues that "the right to make immigration policy within the boundaries of their state is the ordinary sovereign exercise [of] the Jewish community in Israel" (which Arabs challenge). That is like saying that the right to make immigration policy within their state is the ordinary sovereign exercise of the white community in the U.S. Of course, we do not regard the "white community" as having any legitimate "sovereign exercise," ordinary or not, in "their state." Were the "white community" again to use its voting power to pass racist immigration laws, liberals would deplore the fact; it would be far worse were it seriously claimed that this is the "ordinary sovereign exercise" of this "community" in "their state." But Israel is not constructed on the model (however imperfectly realized) of the Western democracies. In the "sovereign state of the Jewish people," the Jewish community exercises sovereignty, a fact that has significant ramifications throughout the society. Similarly, an urban-development plan for the express purpose of preserving the "Jewish character" of Jerusalem passes without objection, though a comparable plan to preserve the "white character" of New York would be abhorrent. The same is true of other examples that I cite, and many more that I did not. Mr. Grossman takes all of this for granted, as his comments (and his silence with regard to examples that I cite) clearly indicate, though I do not doubt that he would be appalled by comparable examples elsewhere. Thus the charge that he falsely levels against me applies directly to him.

The point is simple. Nowhere do I express any objections of the sort that Mr. Grossman attributes to me. Rather I apply to Israel exactly the same standards that I apply to the Arab states (including a potential "Palestinian state," as I repeatedly insist), or any others. Mr. Grossman, in contrast, insists on unique standards for Israel. If he can come to understand this point, he will no longer complain that "Israel is universally judged by different standards from those applied to other nations."

Mr. Grossman asks why I "require more of Israel than [I] would of other nations at war," and speculates on possible answers. He could have saved himself the speculations by noticing that his assumption is false. Most of my comments on departures from democratic principle have nothing to do with the state of war (e.g., the urban-development plan just cited). As for the rest, he fails to mention that I repeatedly stress that these departures might be defended not only on grounds of the state of war, but also by virtue of the severe problems inherent in any effort to construct a democratic multinational society. Thus, "one might argue that the essentially flawed democracy of a Jewish state (equivalently, an Arab state) is the least unjust solution available, given the objective realities." What I deplore, however, is the effort "to bury difficult and uncomfortable facts in a heap of invective," something which I document at length, though Mr. Grossman makes no mention of the fact.

Mr. Grossman refers to Cyprus as an indication that my long-range hopes for binationalism are unrealistic. This is a typical but quite irrational move. Cyprus was not a "binational state" in the traditional Zionist sense of this term, which I adopt. Prior to last summer, Cyprus was rather like Israel within the green line. If this state, with its 17 per cent Turkish minority, was unviable, as Mr. Grossman alleges, then so is Israel. A Jewish state can become a democratic state in one of two ways: by eliminating the structures that grant a privileged status to the Jewish majority and becoming a "national community," the state of its citizens; or by expelling the foreign body. That much, I am afraid, is obvious.

Mr. Grossman argues that it is "illogical" for me to support national-liberation movements such as the PLO (or Zionism: characteristically, he omits my support for the latter), while deploring many of their practices. This is illogical, he claims, because I "detest nationalism." Again, he has

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utterly failed to comprehend what I insistently stress: people have the right of association in national groups, with their own self-governing national institutions. That nationalism is not my personal cup of tea is another and irrelevant matter. Under the federal or socialist binational alternatives that I discuss, these rights would be guaranteed. No question of "logic" arises.

Mr. Grossman notes that at one point I permit myself "some slight degree of optimism" with regard to a statement from the Palestinian Left, and considers the question whether I should therefore "be taxed with crimes committed and gloried in" by such groups. He chooses not to mention that I have repeatedly and explicitly deplored the terrorist acts on both sides, and that I went on to emphasize, in a speech before an Arab audience (chapter 2 in my book), that the program of the PLO is not only suicidal but "intolerable to civilized opinion." He claims, falsely again, that I am "ready to blink at means of hastening the millennium" (namely, terrorism), making no mention of my repeated emphasis that no socialist goal "can be achieved, or even imagined, if the means proposed is armed struggle by one society against another." As to what the point of this persistent falsification may be, I leave it to others to ascertain. Note further that if the "slight degree of optimism" I voiced makes me responsible for the Arab terrorism that I consistently deplore, then, *a fortiori*, Mr. Grossman's position with regard to Israel makes him responsible for the repeated acts of state terrorism: Qibya, Kafr Kassem (with its grotesque judicial aftermath), etc.; bombs in movie theaters, post offices, and American installations in Egypt in 1954 (with a hero's welcome for a returned terrorist in 1967); shooting down of a civilian airliner; killing of hundreds of civilians in bombing raids on villages and refugee camps in Southern Lebanon (e.g., in el-Kfeir, where two children and two adults were murdered two days before Maalot); etc. Anyone who is aware of the facts knows that Israel has played its part in the cycle of terror and response. Mr. Grossman's self-righteousness on this matter is remarkable. My opposition to terror on all sides is clear and explicit, on both moral and political grounds;

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for this reason alone his charges are groundless. But his own position, judging by this review, affords him no right to criticize even those who justify Arab terrorism or remain silent with regard to it.

Mr. Grossman's most serious lapse is to be found in his discussion of my comments on Daniel Berrigan's address. His emotions run so high on this matter as to blind him to the text before his eyes, and he presents a crude falsification accompanied by a diatribe that is better left unmentioned. According to Mr. Grossman I want to show how " 'hysterical' reaction is when Israel is discussed in the U.S. in language . . . Israelis use daily in Israel," and I cite Berrigan's speech as "the example . . . of such a discussion" that I "wish there could be more of, for the good of Israel." In Mr. Grossman's view I claim that Berrigan "evenhandedly admonished Jews and Arabs" while giving "not the faintest hint" of his extreme and unfair criticisms of Israel.

Turning now to the facts, I did not select Berrigan's address as "the example . . ." but cited it as one of many. I did not say that it was "evenhanded" but rather quoted Berrigan's own statement that he would not "take sides" (he did not take sides, but condemned both harshly, though not evenhandedly; Mr. Grossman muddles these totally distinct notions). Typically, Mr. Grossman fails to mention that I stated that critics were right to condemn "Berrigan's unremitting denunciation of Israeli society and his failure to find any good in it—in particular his assertion that Israel has failed 'to create new forms of political and social life for her own citizens.' " So much for my giving "not the faintest hint. . . ." Of course, I never made the proposal that there should be more of such discussions, but rather criticized Berrigan for failing to "give a balanced appraisal of Israeli society, any more than he gave a balanced account of the policies of the Arab states"; and I never suggested that such discussions as his are common in Israel. I also made the general point that criticisms of Israel on the part of the New Left and "peace movement" are not "beyond criticism—far from it," and added that "I find myself in strong disagreement with much of the peace movement and the Left over these issues," referring to discussion elsewhere in the book.

Without departing so flagrantly from the truth, Mr. Grossman might have said that I did not give what he regards as adequate attention to the errors and excesses in Berrigan's address. But this would not have justified the accompanying tirade. Even this would have been incorrect, however, because of another fact that Mr. Grossman barely mentions: the chapter was not devoted to Berrigan, the peace movement, or the New Left, but rather to allegations with regard to them on the part of a substantial segment of Left-liberal opinion. I analyzed quite a range of these, demonstrating that there were serious errors of fact and reasoning, outright lies in some cases, substantial misrepresentation, and a remarkable stream of slander and abuse for which no justification was even attempted. In the special case of Berrigan, I analyzed two representative responses, showing that with the exception just noted, the criticisms offered were based on severe misrepresentation, distortion of fact, and vulgar apologetics of a sort far more serious than the worst of Berrigan's excesses. I then offered a possible explanation for the phenomenon I was discussing, partially in terms of developments within American society. The views of Berrigan and others were discussed only in the context of the reaction to them. These views I presented accurately. Where they were wrong, I noted that fact, contrary to what Mr. Grossman falsely asserts. It is interesting that Mr. Grossman nowhere takes exception to anything that I actually say, but only claims (falsely) that I failed to criticize these views where they were wrong.

Mr. Grossman would no doubt have preferred that I write a different chapter; namely, a detailed analysis of the views with which, as I explicitly stated, I often disagree. A reviewer, however, has the obligation to deal with the author's topic, not pretending that he was discussing something else. And he certainly has no right (to borrow Mr. Grossman's phrase) to "shamelessly misrepresent" what was plainly written, in the manner just described.

Interestingly, Mr. Grossman criticizes this chapter as overly "polemical," while never once mentioning the scandalous nature of the attacks that I was analyzing. How one can respond to lies, slander, and gross misrepresentation

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without being "polemical," he does not inform us. As to my response, it seems to me adequately qualified, entirely accurate, and complete. Perhaps Mr. Grossman secretly agrees, judging by the fact that he entirely evades the actual content of this chapter.

Consider finally Mr. Grossman's account of my views on Vietnam. According to him, I wrote as a "polemicist" who described the war as an attack on the Vietnamese "for the purpose of destroying a national-liberation movement by genocide," while describing the enemy as "the Children of Light" (he allows that I did not use the term, but claims that I depicted them in this manner). This extremism, this "black-and-white" portrayal, he distinguishes from the "more tentative" approach in the present essays, and seems to find it offensive. But he overlooks a slight difficulty. This characterization of my views and rhetoric is false from beginning to end. I never stated that the purpose of the American attack was "genocide." Furthermore, as distinct from Mr. Grossman, I take the term "genocide" seriously, and therefore never used it at all in discussing the Vietnam war. My only reference to the matter is in commenting on some remarks by Townsend Hoopes, where I note that "It is correct, but hardly relevant, to point out that the United States has stopped short of carrying 'its strategic logic to the final conclusion, which is genocide' (Hoopes). Thus one cannot compare American policy to that of Nazi Germany, as of 1942." Thus I explicitly reject the characterization that Mr. Grossman attributes to me. I went on to note that "it would be more difficult to argue that American policy is not comparable to that of fascist Japan, or of Germany prior to the 'Final Solution.'" That happens to be correct, as I explained in an essay on Japanese imperialism.

The inflamed rhetoric to which Mr. Grossman objects is his, not mine. I never use it. The same is true of his reference to "the Children of Light." In fact, I had very little to say about the nature of the forces that the U.S. was trying to crush, except in reporting interpretations on the part of sources close to the U.S. government. Reporting my own first-hand investigations, I used exactly the tentative and cautionary terms that Mr. Grossman falsely claims are missing in this discussion. Similarly, Mr. Grossman states that I describe the Vietnam war as "the logical, necessary expression of American foreign policy." False again. The war may have been a "logical expression" (whatever that means; it is not my term), but I argue repeatedly that it was by no means "necessary." The actual analysis and qualifications that I give, repeatedly and at great length, have escaped Mr. Grossman's attention, so it seems. His only brush with fact is in characterizing my attitude toward apologists for imperialist intervention and violence, whether the issue is American aggression in South Vietnam with its murderous sideshow in surrounding areas, Japan in China, the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, or other events that I describe in the same terms.

There is no reason for Mr. Grossman to be familiar with my writings on Indochina and U.S. foreign policy. Plainly, he either is not, or chooses to disregard them in favor of an invention of his own, attributed to me. The reasons for this might be explored. In a chapter of the book under review, and elsewhere, I have commented on the rewriting of history in which segments of the Left-liberal intelligentsia are engaged, and the reasons for it. Knowing nothing of Mr. Grossman's work, I cannot comment further, except to remark that his falsifications in this regard illustrate a common pattern for which a plausible explanation can be offered.

This exhausts the charges that are clear enough to deserve comment. . . .

NOAM CHOMSKY
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Cambridge, Massachusetts

EDWARD GROSSMAN writes:

The way Noam Chomsky runs on is the thing that might strike the innocent reader as strange, but I can imagine how some might take it for proof of commendable seriousness. At any rate, in dealing with his letter, I shall not again mention his wordiness, though I will try to keep my own remarks on the comparatively brief side.

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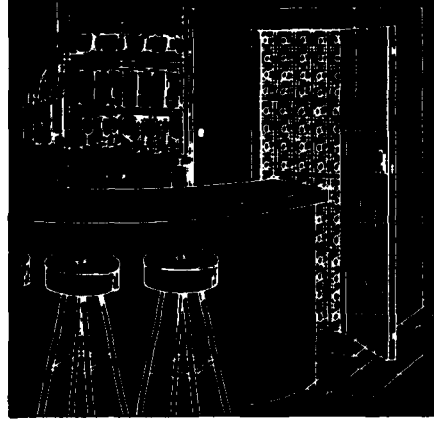

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touchy he is about being quoted in context or paraphrased fairly. He will actually deny having written something when apparently there would seem to be no need and nothing to be gained. Take the matter of his views on the Vietnam war. In the introduction to my review I said that for him it was "a criminal attack by the U.S. on a small, inoffensive people, for the purpose of destroying a national-liberation movement by genocide, in order to protect an imperialistic stake." I added that Mr. Chomsky considered the war a natural expression of American foreign policy since World War II, not a freak or an accidental sidestep into a quagmire.

This synopsis, Mr. Chomsky claims, is "false from beginning to end."

Whatever the motive for such an astonishing declaration, it supposes a high level of ignorance among the readers it is addressed to. Mr. Chomsky's writings on the war are famous; anyone who attended to the debate and polemic over it, and who has half a memory, knows what Mr. Chomsky wrote. For him to say that there is no reason for me to be familiar with what he wrote sounds like false modesty. I assumed a rudimentary familiarity when, for reasons having to do with my consideration of the book under review, I alluded to these writings without bothering to quote.

Now to show a man from Mars that I didn't misrepresent Mr. Chomsky, the best thing I could do would be to tell him to go and read Mr. Chomsky's books. I certainly have no intention of quoting *in extenso* hundreds of pages here. Even to quote several sentences goes against the grain—ought to be unnecessary—but I will, anyway.

From *For Reasons of State*: "It would be accurate to describe the Vietnam war as a struggle between human will and advanced technology." "[The Pentagon Papers reveal] the continuity of policy and the persistence of basic assumptions over a quarter-century."

From *American Power and the New Mandarins*: "It is conceivable that American actions in Vietnam are simply a single outburst of criminal insanity, of no general or long-range significance. . . . It is difficult, however, to put much credence in this possibility." "It is tragic that the United States should have become, in Toynbee's words, 'the leader of a worldwide anti-revolutionary movement in defense of vested interests.'"

From *At War with Asia*: "[The Song My Massacre] was no isolated atrocity but the logical consequence of a virtual war of extermination directed against helpless peasants." "Is it an exaggeration to suggest that our history of extermination and racism is reaching its climax in Vietnam today?"

I am hard put to understand why Mr. Chomsky would in effect deny what he has written, "from beginning to end," especially as even some of his extreme statements do not, in the light of available evidence, appear to be indefensible, and still should be pondered nowadays when most Americans are satisfied to think of Vietnam as ancient history. For example, I believe that to a Vietnamese on the ground in what was called a "free-fire zone," the distinction between genocide and what was happening must have seemed academic.

If Mr. Chomsky now chooses to deny all that, is it out of pure contrariness? Perhaps. But a better reason may be that he doesn't want to be cast as a polemicist and inveterate moralizer, especially when it comes to the Middle East, which is what his book and my review were about.

I alluded to Mr. Chomsky's Vietnam writings, and characterized them, so I could contrast them with the more scrupulously tentative and presumably balanced strategy he deploys in writing about the Middle East, which is yet marked (as I showed) by significant passages in the old style, which is heavily moralistic. I said that the most important thing about Mr. Chomsky's new book is that in it, having weighed the Jewish state on his scales of morality, "Chomsky lends his prestige to calling into question the right of Israel to continue to exist as a state." Thus the title of my review, "A Modest Proposal." Mr. Chomsky proposes politicide. Nothing he has to say in his letter leads me to believe I misread him—on the contrary. I want to return to his crucial theme, but first several of his other complaints can be disposed of.

Mr. Chomsky objects to my comparing his "binationalist" vision of Arabs and Jews living peacefully together, to the "secular, democratic" vision Arafat had in front of the UN General Assembly. Any imputation of similarity is "plainly false," he says in that unconditional manner of his that leaves him so vulnerable, and besides, he was only reiterating principles laid down by Zionists like Sokolov, Ruppin, Ben-Gurion, *et al.*

In the first instance, he is too literal; in the second, a shade disingenuous.

Of course, Mr. Chomsky's vision is not a carbon copy of Arafat's, and I never said it was. Mr. Chomsky is a Western Jewish intellectual steeped in the literature of anarchism, pacifism, and Communism, while Arafat is a Muslim, a nationalist, and a practicing politician—there are bound to be differences in the way they express themselves. Yet there remains a striking similarity here. Mr. Chomsky and Arafat have at least three things in common when they "dream" in public: (1) they both know better than any Israeli does what is best for the Israelis; (2) they both say a Jewish state is intolerable and want to dismantle it and replace it with something that defies description; (3) their tone is millenarian, chiliastic, and its very dreaminess is what chills, for one knows from experience that lovely visions of the distant future are typically the excuse for unlovely actions committed right now.

As for Mr. Chomsky's plea that he was only restating principles of "classical Zionism," I marvel at the gullibility this implies in the audience it is meant to sway. "The traditional Zionist principles that arouse Mr. Grossman's horror have not lost their essential validity and may suggest the way toward a better future," Mr. Chomsky writes in his letter. "It is hardly honest to characterize these explicit references to a major element in classical Zionist thought merely as 'remarkably similar' to Arafat, with no mention whatsoever of their actual source."

No mention?

I quote from my review: "[Chomsky's] prescription, then, is for 'a binationalist state that preserves some degree of communal autonomy' for both peoples in it. Accurately he recalls that this was the hope, and to some extent the vague program, of a section of the Zionist movement, until the Holocaust."

I will refrain from citing numerous other examples of Mr. Chomsky playing fast and loose with texts; suffice it to say that he is in the habit. But a word in defense of the Zionist luminaries he

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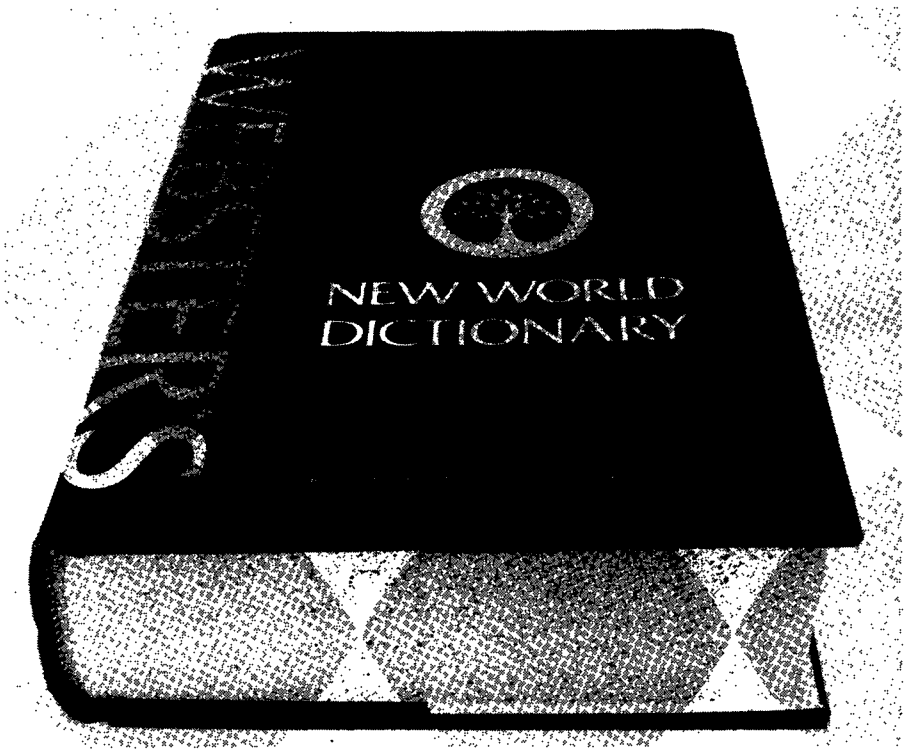
enlists unwillingly to his cause is in order. Ruppin and the rest are dead and can only spin in their graves when tendentiously used. Thus, it is not the "traditional Zionist principles" that arouse my "horror." What troubles me is Mr. Chomsky's selective quotation, in 1975, of things some men said in 1931, and which he knows full well every one of them went back on permanently a few years later, after much thought and tortured reconsideration. Arthur Ruppin's repudiation of binationalism in the face of Hitler, appeasement, and Palestinian terrorism and total opposition to Jewish immigration, is especially well-known. If Mr. Chomsky were more formidable he would have grappled with the facts of Ruppin's disillusionment, and would have explored the question whether the world has become a less nasty place in 1975 than it was forty years ago. For my part, I can detect scant change for the better. However, I must emphasize that, as I look at it, the argument between Mr. Chomsky and me is not a theoretical dispute in an ivory tower over human nature between an ever-hopeful perfectionist and a sour skeptic. Mr. Chomsky's weird style aside, it is a fight between one who for moralistic and political reasons wants to put an end to the Jewish state, and one who for moral and practical reasons wants to see that state endure.

Understandably, Mr. Chomsky is not pleased at having the implications of his plans for Jewish "communal autonomy" spelled out—recent politicides (Biafra, Kurdistan) have made liberals, even some radicals, uncomfortable. He is at great pains in his letter to deny that his critique of the Jewish state strips it of its right to exist, winding up, "Israel has the same right to exist as other discriminatory states." That is big of him. It is not, however, what he said in his book. There he showed by moral logic-chopping that a state that is Jewish in any but trivial respects must always be undemocratic, whether it is at war or at peace with its neighbors, now and forever. "In a Jewish state," Mr. Chomsky wrote, "there can be no full recognition of basic human rights." This is demonstrably untrue, unless the replacement of the one Jewish state by the umpteenth Muslim state is redefined to be a "basic human right."

As I commented in my review, "to declare a state undemocratic



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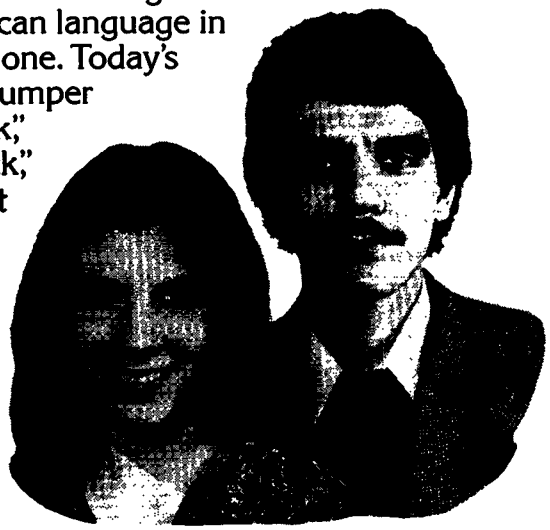

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by nature, not circumstance, is fairly to damn it," especially in liberal circles. But Mr. Chomsky does worse than throw Israel into the same disreputable bag as Saudi Arabia. Israel is the only member of the UN whose dissolution is proposed to the acclamation of the General Assembly. We are talking about real threats; this is not an academic exercise. The excuse is invariably the same: a Jewish state is "undemocratic," "racist." By repeating this libel, Mr. Chomsky assists Arafat in his work.

Immigration policy is the heart of the matter. For Mr. Chomsky as for Arafat, the Law of Return is "racist." Both would have it repealed at the earliest opportunity. Note the analogy Chomsky resorts to—the Law of Return is like the U.S. laws passed after World War I effectively restricting entry of Jews and Southern Europeans. This is a prime example of his operating procedure.

The fact is, of course, that anyone (except a Palestinian) can enter Israel, apply for citizenship, and live undisturbed. I am acquainted with Gentiles who have done so. It is also true that only a Jew can claim citizenship as of the moment he arrives, and that he will be given preference by the bureaucracy in finding a house and job, though a non-Jew will by no means be excluded. Mr. Chomsky and others seize on this as a sign of discrimination so vile as to vitiate Israel's birthright. From a different perspective, I see it as a reflection of historical necessities and severe economic limitations—Israel has enough trouble coping with its Jewish immigrants, fervent or footloose; should it advertise for Gentiles too?

Finally, regarding terrorism: I fear Mr. Chomsky takes me for his favorite game, a liberal. When he speaks of terrorism in his letter (as when he compares a "Jewish" Jerusalem to a "white" New York, as if New York had been surrounded, split in two, bombarded, threatened with internationalization, its synagogues vandalized), he sets up and exploits inconsistencies that would certainly fluster a liberal. But he has me wrong. I do not deplore terrorism in any of its forms. If the Pope, Noam Chomsky, Kurt Waldheim, and Yasir Arafat all unequivocally "deplore terrorism" (as they do), this smothers any urge I might have to raise my voice in public and "deplore" it too. I only brought terrorism up in my review in an effort to keep Mr. Chomsky, who bestows the laurels of a "national-liberation movement" on the PLO while "unequivocally deploring terrorism," honest. You can have it both ways on this only if you evade the central dilemma of our times, which Mr. Chomsky does here and did in his Vietnam writings, where, it will be remembered, he insisted, incredibly, that the Vietcong, a party to a civil war, committed no atrocities.

I freely admit that the Israelis have been responsible for their share of dirty tricks and state stupidities, and a few atrocities. I deny, of course, that this is because Israel is a Jewish state. I reject the idea that because of this the Israelis deserve to have only "communal autonomy." The killing by bombs dropped from a Phantom jet during a retaliation raid does not, as far as I am concerned, place in jeopardy the right of Israel to exist. Israel shouldn't need to be a light unto the nations to justify itself. With the creation of their imperfect little state, the Jews have rejoined the human race somehow, and if the price of continuing membership is some actions that shock liberals and Noam Chomsky, I am willing (considering the alternative) to have the price paid, without pleasure.

McGovern & the Democrats

To the Editor of Commentary:

"The Democrats' Dilemma" by Elliott Abrams [February] surely must consist of more than an indictment of George McGovern and the New Politics forces in the 1968 and 1972 campaigns. . . . I believe Mr. Abrams is on rather shaky ground in some of his premises . . . [and] might be suffering from Eastern provincialism. Let me present my case.

Perhaps the New York . . . McGovernites were upper-middle-income people who "sacrificed their European vacation to work for McGovern," but the vast majority of the college young who worked in the McGovern campaign either were unable to find jobs, or had fears of not being able to find jobs in their field upon graduation. . . . In addition to the youths, there were thousands upon thousands of housewives from every sector of the economy—from welfare mothers to bankers' wives. These people were joined by citizens from every racial stock, from every ethnic group, from every religion, from every occupational group. The vast majority of volunteers certainly would not qualify as "elite" by either economic or social standards. Even the comfortable were likely to be products of lower-middle-class working families. It is wrong to assume that jobs were not important to them; it is wrong to assume that they had no sympathy with the blue-collar worker; and today it is wrong to assume that the issue of jobs separates the McGovern wing from the other wings of the Democratic party. . . .

Mr. Abrams's article emphasizes one aspect of the 1972 campaign, but ignores other factors that led to defeat. In the Ripon Society's *Jaws of Victory*, the authors point out that while McGovern might have lost some conservative old-line Democrats during the hectic convention, he picked up major support among independents. . . . But the Eagleton affair . . . disenchanted these voters, possibly because of overemotional press coverage in favor of Eagleton. The whole campaign effort was demoralized. McGovern's ratings in the polls fell again, and the campaign never really recovered. . . .

In addition, the primary battles were an important reason for the party's defeat in November. The attacks on McGovern by Jackson and Humphrey were brutal, and Muskie's "Hamlet" behavior did not add to party unity. . . .

The most feeble complaint, however, is the accusation that the McGovern wing stole the nomination through party reforms fostered by McGovern. But these new regulation were accepted by the National Committee under Lawrence O'Brien. The national organization certainly was not under the thumb of McGovern . . . and it certainly was not stacked in favor of the reformers. Labor's representatives did not attend the meetings nor did they contribute their votes to the outcome; this was *their* choice—not that of the reformers. McGovern stated very clearly to Stewart Alsop in a *Newsweek* column exactly how he intended to win the nomination: to use the reforms whenever he possibly could to gain delegates. It certainly wasn't McGovern's fault if the regulars, the labor leaders, the pundits did not listen to him. . . .

But most of all Mr. Abrams ignores the fact of George Wallace. Hubert Humphrey did not do that much better in 1968 than McGovern did in 1972. If Mr. Abrams's

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formula for success in national politics were true, Humphrey should have won the election easily in 1968. In fact, McGovern did better than Humphrey in many congressional districts in percentage of votes. Subtract organized labor and subtract Wallace votes from Nixon, and you will find that McGovern received the same percentage as Humphrey. . . .

The real conflicts between the reformers and the establishment politicians at Kansas City were: is the party going to take positions on issues (McGovern's speech); is the Democratic party going be built from the bottom up—or is it a party of elected officials; and how much influence will rank-and-file Democrats have in the selection of the party's candidates? In other words, a struggle for party power. . . .

Many of us believe that the Democratic party must work from the ground up to restore confidence in our system. By allowing full participation of anyone who is interested, the party will gradually reflect all the concerns of the nation. The politicians are our servants—not vice versa. . . .

Mr. Abrams's attacks on McGovern and the reformers of the Democratic party are counter-productive. The real problem of the Democrats is how to restore confidence in the government, how to defang the Wallace threat, and how to build a platform that will keep popular loyalty. In addition to the regular registered Democrats, the 40 per cent of the people who consider themselves independent must be brought back into the party system. . . . The Democratic party should build its support on more than economic disaster. There are many viewpoints on how this should be done. But no sensible believer in the Democratic party can unify the party by attacking personalities.

Last of all, the article is very disturbing to me because Mr. Abrams appears to feel that it is a "crime" for the 1972 Democratic candidate for President to make passionate appeals for his positions and his dreams. He has paid the price of defeat, he has paid the price for his mistakes, and he evidently does not think it was too high for he intends to remain an outspoken advocate of his principles. In this nation, McGovern has the right to be a prophet rather than a politician if he so desires. Besides, none of the books, articles, and discussions of the 1972 election ever discusses whether McGovern would have been a better President than Nixon. It seems to me that though he might have lost many of the battles, he will probably win the war.

DOROTHY SAWYER
Carmichael, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

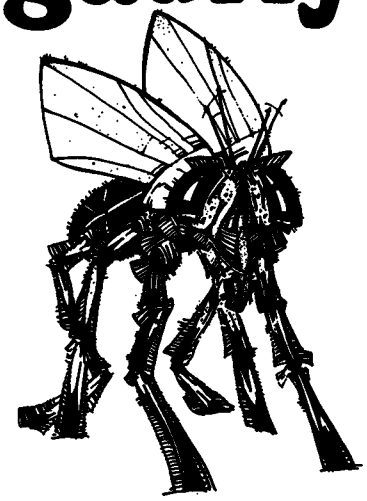
Elliott Abrams, in his otherwise perceptive analysis, persists in seeing the Democratic party as divided into two wings, the New Politics movement and the traditionally Democratic working class. The problem with this depiction is that it assumes that the white working class is more or less unified in its political tendencies.

In fact, there are three wings in the Democratic party. The largely upper-middle-class "Left" wing of the party corresponds to Mr. Abrams's New Politics forces. But white working-class Democrats are themselves divided. The "Center" of the party is the Kennedy-Johnson-Humphrey wing, the wing which most closely approximates the traditional New Deal Democratic coalition. The "Right" wing of the party is, of course, George Wallace. During the 1972 campaign, when Democrats were asked which candidate they preferred as their party's nominee, the party rank-and-file divided roughly into thirds, one-third for McGovern, one-third for Humphrey, and one-third for Wallace.

So much attention was paid to the New Politics split that many analysts have ignored the persistent division in the white working-class vote. Humphrey and Wallace competed for this vote in the 1968 election and again in the 1972 primaries. In situations where the *economic* issue predominated, the blue-collar vote swung to Humphrey. In cases where *race* was the predominant concern, the blue-collar vote shifted to Wallace.

The political dynamics of the past fifteen years cannot really be understood without first seeing the critical position of the Democratic Center. Center does not mean uncommitted. It was precisely the commitment of the Center that got it into so much trouble in the 60's. The Kennedy-Johnson-Humphrey Center is committed to the New Deal tradition of liberalism and civil rights; and the cold-war tradition of anti-Communism and interventionism. The crucial point is that the great protest

the gadfly



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movements of the 60's, the antiwar movement and the Wallace movement, were *directed against the policies of the party's Center,* and not . . . against each other.

The Wallace movement began in 1964 as a protest against the Kennedy-Johnson-Humphrey commitment to civil rights and racial integration. The Wallace movement was *not* organized to fight the McCarthy-McGovern wing of the party, whom the Wallace people hardly understood and naturally distrusted (and who, in any case, had no real power).

The McCarthy and McGovern movements began in 1968 as a protest against the Kennedy-Johnson-Humphrey commitment to the Vietnam war. The antiwar movement was *not* organized to fight the Wallace wing of the party, whom the antiwar people hardly understood and naturally distrusted (and who, in any case, had no real power). Indeed, there was a good deal of unrealistic expectation in 1972 that the Wallace wing . . . would gang up with the McGovern wing against the Center.

It is this beleaguered Center of the Democratic party that has experienced a great resurgence since 1972. The new strength of the Center has come about, not because of ideological exhaustion, but rather because the Center continues to represent the Roosevelt tradition of economic relief in hard times. Thus, in the 1974 election, the party regained a considerable amount of support from white working-class voters who had defected in past elections to Wallace, to Nixon, and to law-and-order candidates. The reason, very simply, is that in 1974 economic fear had overtaken racial fear.

Senator Jackson likes to present himself as the candidate of the resurgent Center of the Democratic party. Indeed, Jackson has ties to all three wings of the party —the Left (Israel, a basic commitment to civil rights), to the Center (good on social-welfare and labor issues), and to the Right (antibusing). But his ties to each wing of the party are moderate, not passionate, in intensity. And passion, not moderation, is what wins primaries.

WILLIAM SCHNEIDER
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

ELLIOTT ABRAMS writes:

It is not surprising to find Diane Sawyer unhappy with my analysis of the McGovern disaster, for she refuses to admit that it happened. "Hubert Humphrey did not do that much better in 1968 than McGovern did in 1972," she tells us. Why, "in fact McGovern did better than Humphrey in many congressional districts. . . ." George McGovern won *one* state in 1972, while in 1968 Humphrey won 13 even in the face of the 10-million-vote tally that won five states for Wallace. Nixon got 60.7 per cent of the votes in 1972 and beat McGovern by 18 million votes; he got 43.4 per cent of the votes in 1968 and beat Humphrey by 500,000 votes. So much for Miss Sawyer as a historian.

She is no more helpful as a political scientist. She tells us to "subtract organized labor and subtract Wallace votes from Nixon, and you will find that McGovern received the same percentage as Humphrey. . . ." Presumably Miss Sawyer tells us this in defense of McGovern, but it is a rather curious defense of any Democrat to state that his only difficulty was his inability to win working-class voters. It is rather like saying "subtract middle-class votes from Johnson and you will find that Goldwater did as well as Nixon." Miss Sawyer's formulation in fact confirms the thesis of my article and the books it discusses: McGovern lost in a landslide because he lost the Democratic party's base of working-class voters.

Miss Sawyer has learned nothing from our recent political history and would apparently like to repeat it. She wants a party not of "elected officials" but "built from the bottom up" by "anyone who is interested." But it is a strange theory of democracy that pays more attention to "anyone who is interested" than to the "elected officials" who have won the support of the voters. In fact, McGovern's real aim in 1972, as Miss Sawyer earlier admits, was "to use the reforms whenever he possibly could to gain delegates." I did not criticize McGovernites for this goal, as Miss Sawyer apparently believes, but to this day I cannot stomach the reformist, populist rhetoric so often used to camouflage what was nothing more than a simple power play.

Finally, it is worth noting Miss Sawyer's comments that "McGovern has the right to be a prophet rather than a politician if he so desires," and that "he has paid the price . . . and evidently he does not think it was too high. . . ." While no one would seek to limit Senator McGovern's vocational opportunities, Miss Sawyer forgets that the "price" was not personal discomfort for McGovern but the reelection of Richard Nixon. For most Democrats, this price was extravagant, and it is to be hoped that the next nominee will not be a "prophet" making "passionate appeals" for his "dreams," but a political leader who can unite the party and win the election.

In response to William Schneider's thoughtful letter, I would note that I differentiated between the McGovern wing of the Democratic party and the party's working-class segments largely on class lines, and suggested that the interests of the two groups may be very different. Mr. Schneider is certainly correct in noting the additional cleavage among working-class Democrats in 1968 and 1972, as the working-class vote was split, in the primaries, between "centrists" and Wallace. But I do not believe that the working-class Wallace voters have interests at variance with those of the working-class supporters of, say, Humphrey. And I do not believe that most Wallace voters are any longer motivated primarily by racism and are rebelling against the Center of the party. Rather, it seems to me that in recent years Wallace's appeal has spread in part because he has concentrated on economic rather than racial issues, and in part because the McGovern wing of the party took control of the party from the Center. In any event, I do not see the three-way split as a permanent one, and I believe that the Wallace "movement" will last no longer than does Wallace's personal appeal.

Mr. Schneider closes by stating that it takes a hard core of passionate supporters, not a broad moderate appeal, to win primaries, and he therefore implies that Senator Jackson will not do well in them. I would only note that, as we learned in 1972, it takes broad moderate appeal to win elections. If it is correct that Senator Jackson has this appeal, then Jackson would be the Democratic party's strongest candidate in the 1976 election.

[*Since writing "The Democrats' Dilemma," Mr. Abrams has become assistant counsel to the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations whose chairman is Senator Jackson.*—ED.]

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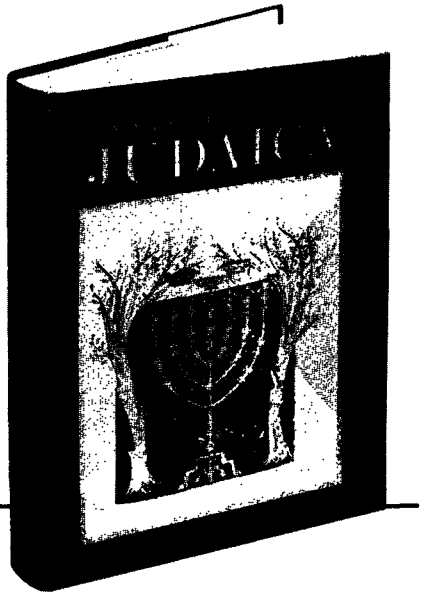

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Anti-Semitism in Film

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

William S. Pechter's review of *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* [November 1974] has just come to my attention here in Hamburg, Germany. I would like to respond to it because he refers to my article in the New York *Times* of September 8, 1974, "Some Questions about the Depiction of Jews in New Films."

For reasons best known to himself, Mr. Pechter finds it necessary not only to distort and misrepresent my point of view, but to attribute quotations to me that exist nowhere in the article. Mr. Pechter says: "Is it [the movie] bad for the Jews? I can't agree with Rabbi Dan Isaac who recently claimed in the pages of the New York *Times* that it is and it gives aid and comfort to the anti-Semite."

Nowhere in my article do I state that *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* is "bad for the Jews." And I'll pass on Mr. Pechter's cheap rhetoric about giving aid and comfort to the anti-Semite—except to say that my piece was primarily about the argument and ideology buried in two films that present themselves as "comedies": *Duddy Kravitz* and *The Mad Adventures of Rabbi Jacob*.

In referring to Duddy's character and pointing out his general lack of moral virtue, I did say: "Now that we have *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* we can forget about *The Merchant of Venice*. Indeed, the film itself links Duddy with Shylock." In responding to that point, Mr. Pechter turns talmudic somersaults in trying to explain away the Shylock reference; and in the process tries to whitewash Duddy's character by placing the blame on the Jewish community. . . .

But . . . in fact in the film Duddy looks pretty bad. He uses his Gentile girl friend as a front for his land deals; and lets his epileptic friend, Virgil, take the kinds of risks that leave him paralyzed for life. I find it curious that Mr. Pechter only refers to this key incident in the film as "of a quite irredeemable banality." Because it is bad art, does this mean we should forget about it when making the moral judgments about Duddy that the film continually pushes for? . . .

Mr. Pechter finally reveals himself in the concluding sentences of his review, and I'd prefer to quote them directly:

> Duddy is portrayed, warts and all, and flung into the teeth of those who would scorn him. And though this spectacle is quintessentially by, about, and for Jews, the sensibility which informs it is at once sufficiently strong in its ethnic ties and secure in its relations to the world at large to relieve one of the least anxiety about having it seen by (and, for that matter, flung into the teeth of) the white man.

So at last we discover that the anxiety of whether or not the film about Duddy Kravitz is good or bad for the Jews belongs to the COMMENTARY critic. *Duddy Kravitz* turns out to be a good film because it socks it to the *goyim*. Which means that Mr. Pechter has adopted the junk dealer's point of view and sees the world as *them* against *us*.

And it is just this kind of paranoia in the name of self-survival that takes us down the road to gangsterism and fascism.

(RABBI) DAN ISAAC
University of Hamburg
Hamburg, Germany

WILLIAM S. PECHTER writes:

Before getting directly to Dan Isaac's letter, I'd like to make one point more plainly than I perhaps have previously. I don't consider *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* a film of any great artistic consequence, and I wasn't motivated to defend it against the charge of anti-Semitism by any particular fondness for it. The "importance" I attach to *Duddy Kravitz* resides strictly in the unprecedentedness (for mass-audience movies) of its treatment of its subject matter: in the combination of the unvarnished seaminess and lack of defensiveness with which it depicts a Jewish milieu.

I want to say also that I didn't consider my review an attack on Rabbi Isaac or his piece, which raised issues that needed discussing, but only an attempted refutation of his argument. And I hope he'll believe me when I say that it honestly didn't occur to me when I used the phrase "bad for the Jews" (my own inversion of the standard query, "Is it good for the Jews?") that the quotation marks would imply its attribution to him. Having said this, I find it difficult to understand the umbrage he takes at the possibility of one's thinking that the words are his. I, for one, don't find the question of whether or not a film such as *Duddy Kravitz* is bad for the Jews a vulgar one, and, if Rabbi Isaac thinks he's discovered some damaging truth in finding me concerned with it, I can only say that I never thought to disguise the fact that I was. Nor am I able to consider the question of whether or not a book or movie is anti-Semitic as an ideologically or aesthetically abstract one, as though anti-Semitism in such works were just another bankrupt idea or stylistic blemish, like tired imagery. Surely, one wants to be alert to anti-Semitism in the first place because it has consequences. And to say that it's bad for the Jews in no way denies the fact that, in its general brutalization of feeling, it's bad for everyone.

Rabbi Isaac suggests that I identify myself with Farber, the junk dealer, in his them-versus-us and law-of-the-jungle mentality when in fact I said both in my piece and again in a previous exchange of letters on the subject [Letters from Readers, March] that it's the film itself which seems to endorse Farber's viewpoint to a degree I find disturbing. What I like about the film is its undefensiveness in depicting Farber and in publicly airing such other "dirty laundry," which doesn't imply that I feel comfortable with the film's suggestion that dirty laundry may be no worse a thing than clean. But even short of arguing that the film is a justification of Farber and Duddy, I think one can defend it against the charge of its being anti-Semitic. In this regard, the "irredeemable banality" of the business with the girl friend and the crippled Virgil *does* make a difference: it's not merely a case of such things being bad art, but of the weakness of their impact on an audience compared with that of the steamrolling Duddy. I realize one can adduce such intangibles as an audience's response to prove whatever one wants, so it may not be worth much for me to say that, in the audible responses of the large audience with which I saw the film and in the responses of the many people with whom I've discussed it since, I've been struck with the unanimity with which Duddy's been found likable, however much one knows he's to be disapproved of.

As I also said in that previous exchange of letters, I think that

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anyone believing he sees anti-Semitism in a work of art ought to condemn it, and it was from this perspective that I attempted to defend *Duddy Kravitz* against such charges as Rabbi Isaac's. But if one's perceiving anti-Semitism presents one with an obligation to speak out, there's a concomitant to this. For surely one's attempt to alert others to the anti-Semitic content of a work of art is directed in large part to sympathetic Gentiles in one's audience. And one has, then, the further obligation not to deaden the response of such friends to the real and vicious anti-Semitism of, say, a *Jesus Christ Superstar* by invoking the specter of anti-Semitism where it doesn't exist. One is obliged, that is, to be scrupulously attentive to the often complex and indirect ways in which works of art communicate to and affect their audience. One's beginning with a simplistic assumption that *The Merchant of Venice* is a universally accepted exemplar of anti-Semitism in the arts and then proceeding to go after a work as oblique in its attitudes as *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* with rhetoric of the move-over-Shylock variety contributes little, I think, to insuring that a vigilance to genuine anti-Semitism, in art and elsewhere, will continue to get the sympathetic hearing it needs and deserves.

"Paterson"

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his review of my book, *Black Mafia: Ethnic Succession in Organized Crime* [Books in Review, February], B. Bruce-Briggs concludes that the evidence I offer does not support my thesis of changing control in organized crime. It is, of course, always possible for two or more analysts to look at the same evidence and reach different conclusions, but I think there is some question as to the care with which Mr. Bruce-Briggs examined my evidence in this case. In the second paragraph of his review, he identifies one of the crime networks I describe as follows: ". . . a single organization in 'Patterson' (all individual names are fictional; one must assume that places are too). . . ." After reading the review, I re-examined my book (and the paperback edition as well) and I cannot find the spelling "Patterson" anywhere. Neither can I find any reason why one must assume the place names are fictional since I state quite clearly in the introduction that they are real and spend some fifteen pages identifying and describing the city of Paterson, New Jersey, its demography, its history, its political role as the county seat of Passaic County, and nowhere do I call it anything other than Paterson. Even the chapter in which the material appears is called "Paterson, New Jersey." I find Mr. Bruce-Briggs's assumption that "Patterson" is fictional all the more astounding since he is identified in the author's note as someone who is writing a book on (of all things) the future of cities.

Francis A. J. Ianni
Columbia University
New York City

Mr. Bruce-Briggs writes:

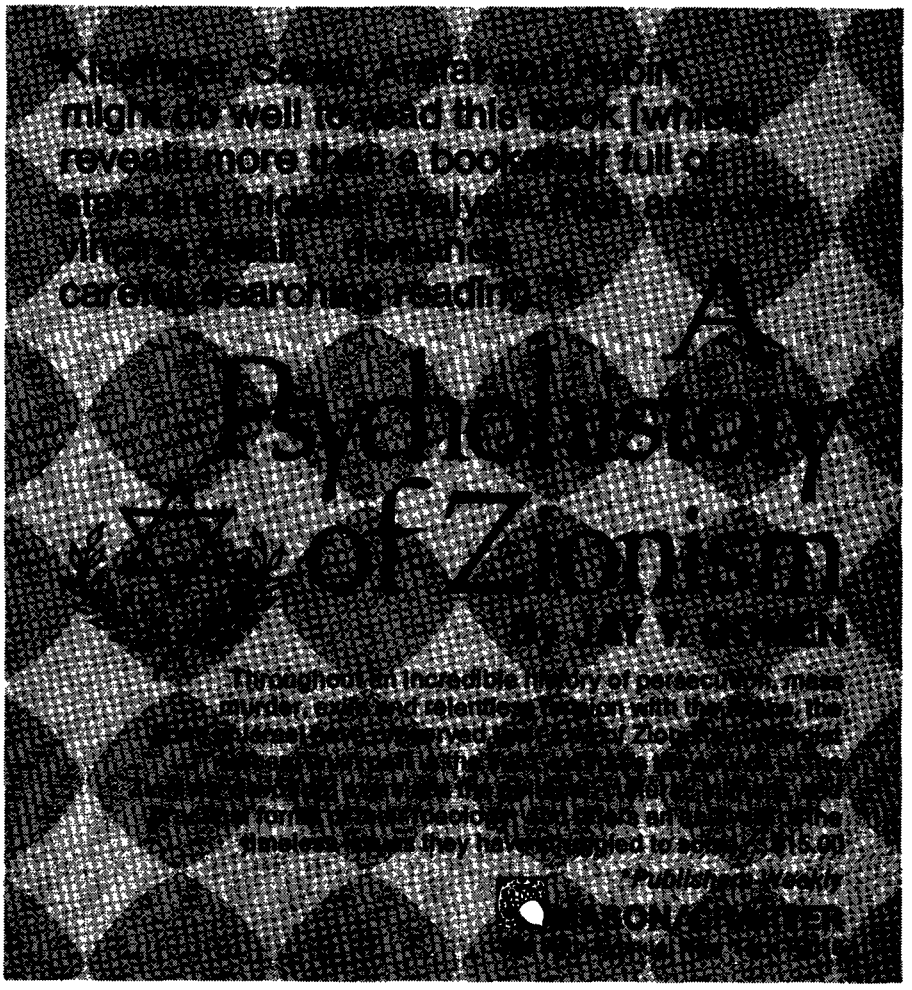
Since no one has a complete picture of a private activity such as organized crime, the publishing of precise information is evidence of the source of the information. For this reason, police and intelligence organizations are loath to let it be known what they know, lest the other side learn who informed them. Since *Black Mafia* describes a capable and ruthless criminal organization in sufficient detail to be helpful to police and competitors, "one must assume" that "Paterson" is a cover name; the alternative interpretations are that the entire account is fictitious, or that the author has been dangerously irresponsible in risking life and limb of his informants.

Leonard Schroeter

To the Editor of Commentary:

Maurice Friedberg in his review of Leonard Schroeter's *The Last Exodus* [Books in Review, December 1974] describes Mr. Schroeter as the "principal legal assistant" to Israel's Attorney General from early 1970 to mid-1972. For the sake of accuracy, I wish to note that Mr. Schroeter served in the Ministry of Justice of the State of Israel as one among a number of senior assistants to the Attorney General.

Y. Guttman
Office of the Minister of Justice
Jerusalem, Israel



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Dialogue

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While I found the last part of Frank Talmage's "Christianity and the Jewish People" [February] persuasive and moving, the first section makes several points that require considerable clarification.

After a quotation from Solomon de Rossi which expresses a reluctance to engage in religious disputations with Christians, Mr. Talmage notes that "Solomon was clearly not an advocate of dialogue" and that this attitude was representative of "most medieval Jews." This avoidance of disputations is then attributed largely to the fact that medieval Jews had no identity crisis and thus no psychological need to define themselves through confrontation with their adversaries.

In fact, the extent of Jewish initiation of religious discussions in the Middle Ages is by no means clear. Solomon de Rossi was indeed a reluctant polemicist, but Joseph Official and the anonymous author of the *Nizzahon Vetus* give a quite different impression. In light of this and other evidence (some of which I shall discuss in my forthcoming edition and translation of the *Nizzahon Vetus*), it is probably a mistake to dismiss the Christian assertions that Jews challenged their adversaries to defend their faith. Moreover, since both Jacob ben Reuben and Solomon de Rossi say that they are reluctant to engage in disputations because of fear of the consequences, and since this appears to be an adequate justification for such reluctance, the legitimacy of adding a psychological explanation is questionable. Even a person with no identity crisis can be tempted to confront an oppressor who continually mocks and belittles his faith.

Mr. Talmage's next point is particularly interesting and also calls for some comment. He maintains that because Jews were "secure" in their own faith they generally gave positive appraisals of Christianity. This tendency, in fact, continued among those Jews "who stayed rooted in the Jewish sources," while negative appraisals of Christianity (which saw it as "inclining toward paganism") were generally characteristic of Jews who were less rooted in those sources (and these include Mendelssohn, Geiger, and Benamosegh among others).

This is an original analysis which may be valid for some individual thinkers, but it is hardly tenable as a general principle. Most medieval Jews gave a starkly negative portrayal of Christianity. Maimonides and Ha-Meiri, whom Mr. Talmage cites, are hardly proper models for a generalization about the Jewish attitude; Maimonides never lived in a Christian country, and Ha-Meiri's attitude toward non-Jews was quite exceptional in many respects. The Jewish polemical sources of the Middle Ages regarded Christianity as a polytheistic religion and criticized everything from its fundamental theology to its effect on the morality of its adherents. (A distinction between "major thinkers" and polemicists will not really work because many of Mr. Talmage's modern examples come from polemical contexts and because medieval polemicists were just as rooted in Jewish sources as their more distinguished contemporaries.) Noth-

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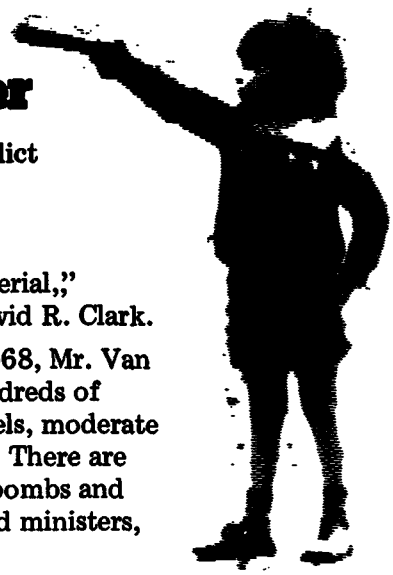

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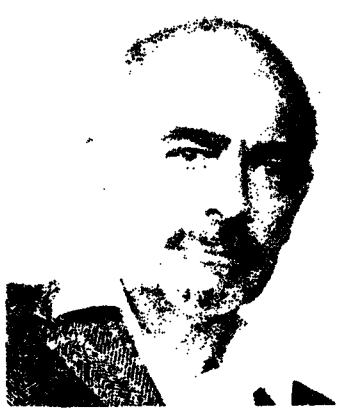

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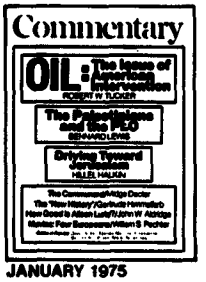

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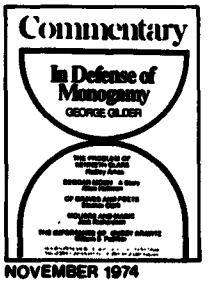

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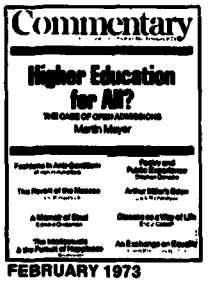

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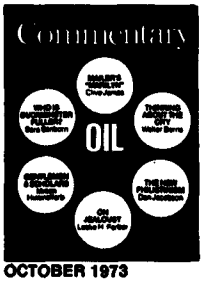

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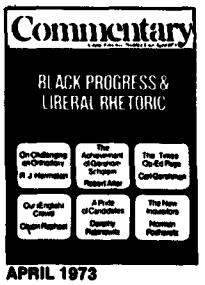

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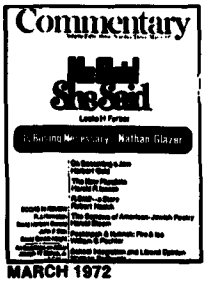

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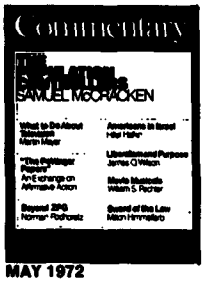

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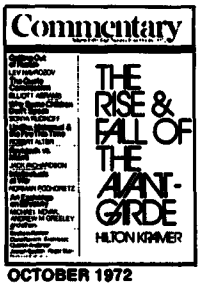

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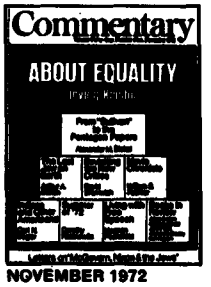

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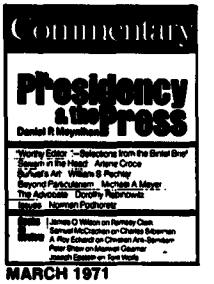

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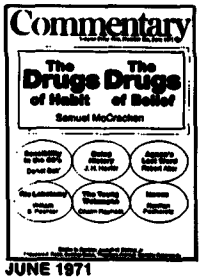

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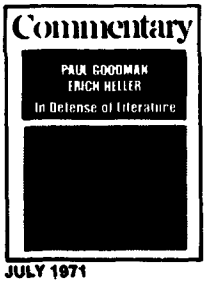

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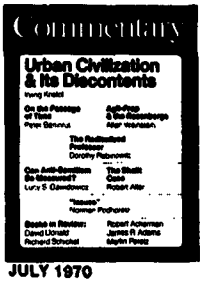

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ing in the modern writers approaches the vituperation and contempt in some of the medieval Ashkenazic polemics, nor do the most favorable remarks by Maimonides or Ha-Meiri approach the positive evaluation of Christianity in some of the works of Claude Montefiore and other modern Jews who were not as "rooted in the sources."

In short, both medieval and modern Jews have differed with one another in their evaluations of Christianity, but there is no historical relationship between a Jewish identity crisis and a more negative appraisal of the Christian faith.

DAVID BERGER
Brooklyn College
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I heartily agree with Frank Talmage's statement that, as far as the Jewish-Christian dialogue is concerned, nothing has changed since the period of Tertullian and the Middle Ages. I also agree with Mr. Talmage's evaluation of the discussion between Rosenstock-Huessy and Franz Rosenzweig. Rosenstock-Huessy, of whose sociological works I think very highly, was a Jewish convert to the Christian faith. This makes the famous debate between the two giants especially piquant, and I have always admired the enormous tact on the part of Rosenzweig who never alluded, even slightly, to this fact. . . .

I am surprised, however, that Mr. Talmage repeats the frequent error of . . . calling Leo Baeck a Reform rabbi. As I have shown in my essay on him published in a B'nai B'rith series, Baeck, notwithstanding his lectures at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, was what is called in America and Canada a Conservative. He never officiated in a Reform synagogue, but in temples with modernized service, organ, and mixed choir (and which maintained the separation between men and women). . . .

HENRY WALTER BRANN
Takoma Park, Maryland

FRANK TALMAGE writes:

David Berger is no doubt correct in asserting that there were those in the Middle Ages, as in any age, who were eager to voice their criticisms of the faith of the dominant culture—and for precisely the reasons he suggests. I would, however, express two reservations:

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Audacity and vituperation, such as that found in the Northern French polemical literature, should not be mistaken for enthusiasm for disputation. Nahmanidest in his time and Buber in ours combined an all but reckless audacity in confronting Christianity with a persistent reluctance to debate (and not for fear of reprisal alone). The majority of medieval disputational works were, in my view, primarily directed toward apostates or those on the verge of apostasy; accordingly, the vehement denunciations of Christianity to which Mr. Berger refers had as their purpose, more often than not, the demonstration of the folly of conversion. The apostate, it must be recalled, was far more the object of Jewish wrath than was the Christian from infancy.

I do not distinguish among major figures and polemicists. Some major figures were polemicists and vice versa. My intention was merely to indicate that Christianity often fared far better in a non-polemical (*halakhic* or internal homiletical) context than in a polemical one. To be sure, Ha-Meiri was exceptional in many respects. Yet, when the question was raised in a legal setting, various authorities (Jacob Tam, Isaac of Corbeil, Isaac bar Sheshet Perfet, Joseph Karo . . .) declared Christianity a non-idolatrous religion. More striking are the statements of Joseph Jabez and Isaac Arama, writing in one of the periods of greatest tension in the history of Jewish-Christian relations, who maintained that Christians accepted the Torah in principle—albeit with an admixture of error. It was only on account of this, they insisted, that Judaism managed to survive its long exile, for no pagan society would have allowed it to exist. Nor would I be too hasty to disqualify Maimonides from passing positive judgment on Christianity (and on Islam) because he lived in a Muslim country. On the contrary, because his remarks (like the similar observations of Judah Halevy) were gratuitous, they are all the more credible.

Yet all this is secondary to my main point, namely, that outside of polemics, medieval Jewish literature is concerned with Christianity only tangentially. (See my remark: "—to the extent that they were concerned with it at all.") In marked contrast, those moderns of whom I spoke, who were searching for their Jewish orientation, could not even begin their exposition of Judaism without setting up Christianity as a foil. It should be noted, incidentally, that I use "identity crisis" less as a psychological term than as an expression of cultural bankruptcy. The same sort of phenomenon can be seen among some Canadians, who, searching for self-definition, find it primarily through a denigration of American culture and society.

Finally, I would be reluctant to compare Montefiore with the other figures I mentioned. Some might find him a bit *too* enthusiastic. I would prefer to think of Klausner, who combined pride and confidence in Jewish tradition and nationhood with an appreciation for Christianity. But, then, he too was one of those "rooted" Jews.

I thank Henry Walter Brann for his comments and stand corrected if I failed to give Leo Baeck his proper designation in accepting his adoption by American Reform.

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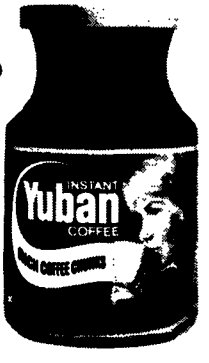

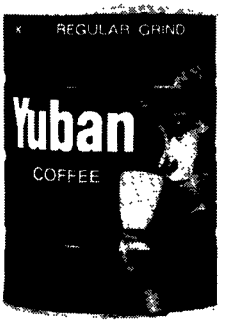

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The Exposed American Jew

Nathan Glazer

Until four or five years ago, it could be argued—and I myself did so argue—that the concern of some Jewish community leaders for the position of Jews in the United States was exaggerated. Anti-Semitism had suffered an unexpected but almost total collapse after World War II, as had anti-Chinese and anti-Japanese sentiment, and as had—to a less marked degree but still one amazing in the light of three hundred years of American history—anti-black prejudice. Under these circumstances, until the end of the 1960's one could take the position that Jewish communal efforts in the fight against anti-Semitism were probably more extensive than they needed to be; and indeed, the resources of the defense agencies were increasingly put to other uses, such as the support of Jewish culture or the advancement of liberal causes generally.

This cheerful assessment of the position of Jews in American life may still be the right one, but since the early 1970's I for one, along with many other people, have taken a less sanguine view. In all honesty, some of the things I expected to happen to the detriment of Jews have not happened. Thus, in 1971, it seemed to me that there could not fail to be serious domestic consequences from the loss of the Vietnam war, and it seemed likely that Jews would suffer from those consequences. There was nothing exceptional in this point of view then. After all, how could the United States *not* respond to the first loss of a war in its history? And how was it possible for the response not to take the form of a right-wing reaction, in which Jews would be accused of some responsibility for this loss? Consider that the leading opposition to the war was developed on the elite university campuses, among both faculty and students. Consider the relative prominence of Jews among the critics, and their relative absence—together, of course, with the rest of the college-student population—among those who were drafted. Consider that the burden of death and maiming was borne by working-class and rural and small-town youth. Consider that Jews (not necessarily the same ones who called for our withdrawal from Vietnam, but there was substantial overlap) also called for American support for Israel. Certainly one could see the ingredients of a backlash, and in fact the common wisdom in those days was that there would be a backlash.

It hasn't happened—yet; and it probably won't. The period of defeat was diffused over a number of years. By the time it was finally over in 1975, there was a universal weariness and annoyance with the war, the campus riots and the liberal and radical opposition had been forgotten, and Jews were—because of the increasing danger to Israel—as much identified with those who *wanted* American military commitment to our friends overseas as with those who had *fought* our military intervention in Vietnam.

But there had also been other reasons up until recently to expect a right-wing backlash which would be at least partly directed against Jews. In the 1960's and early 1970's the United States went through revolutionary social change; sexual mores were transformed, pornography became open and legal, abortion suddenly became legal, the women's movement transformed the domestic family scene. In many of the battles over these issues one saw the classic confrontation of Jewish liberals and radicals versus Catholic and fundamentalist Protestant conservatives. Such radical social change affecting the most intimate aspects of life, it seemed, must lead to an unsettling frustration, and a parallel aggression; and if it did, would not the classic scapegoat of Western Christianity, the Jews, be held responsible, particularly since Jews were so prominent in causing these frustrations?

Once again, it didn't happen. The sexual revolution took place, and Middle America did not fight back. Indeed, here is one of those mysteries that social scientists should explore. What has happened to that great reservoir that fed the Know-Nothings, the American Protective Association, the Ku Klux Klan, the Coughlin movement, and the rest? Of course, one can argue it is still there in the Wallace movement, and yet it appears to me remarkably reduced. Perhaps Watergate served to channel the anger in another direction, against the Republican party, so that

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there was no way of directing the frustrations over Vietnam and social change into anger against liberals and radicals. In any case, no such anger has developed.

HAVING cried wolf twice, one had perhaps best simply take it for granted that the good fortune of American Jews, their economic prosperity and political security, will never be threatened in the United States, whatever the record of Jewish history elsewhere. There are three new developments, however, which potentially may have serious consequences for American Jews: it is at least worth thinking about them.

The first—a matter which has already received a good deal of attention in COMMENTARY and from Jewish defense agencies—is the rise of affirmative action. It is important to make one distinction in discussing affirmative action that the government agencies enforcing it and the leading court decisions supporting it have steadily obscured. In one sense, affirmative action means simply going beyond a passive non-discrimination to advertising the fact that jobs, admission to schools, housing, and so on are available to all, and aggressively seeking applicants among groups that seem markedly absent from a working force, an educational institution, a residential community. Affirmative action in this sense can take the form of announcements, advertising, special recruiting, and the like. In the second sense—I call it "strong" affirmative action—a statistical requirement is imposed. It is this "strong" affirmative action that came into full effect, in the field of employment, in 1971, owing to a strengthened interpretation of a federal executive order barring discrimination by government contractors, to parallel developments in the courts (the Supreme Court decision in *Griggs* v. *Duke Power*, in 1971), and a strengthening of the powers of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission by legislation in 1972.

This type of affirmative action—which is now mandated for every business in the country of any size, and for just about every college and university, as well as for all governmental bodies—calls in its simplest form for some effort to increase the representation of "underutilized" groups. It was immediately apparent that such a policy would not help "overutilized" groups like the Jews (who are less than 3 per cent of the population but comprise, for example, 19 per cent of faculty in elite colleges and universities). But would it actually hurt the Jews? Affirmative action has certainly affected the economic position of individual Jews—insofar as they are part of the "white male" group now identified as having been the beneficiaries of past discrimination—but since it is applied for women as well as ethnic minorities, and since the reservoir of qualified Jewish women ready and able to move into these newly-opened opportunities is quite substantial, it is not clear that the overall economic position of the Jewish community will be seriously affected. Nevertheless the assumption behind "strong" affirmative action, that differential achievement among groups must be the result of discrimination, may well have unsettling consequences for the Jewish community, especially when taken together with a second recent development.

This second development is the new frankness in the United States about ethnic and racial matters. In itself this is a positive development. In the 1950's it was daring to talk about the ethnic aspect of American political and economic life, just as in the 1920's it was daring—apparently—to talk about class in American life. The myth of the 1920's was that the United States was a classless society. *Middletown*, in which the Lynds rediscovered what was obvious, came as something of a revelation, as did the community studies written or inspired by W. Lloyd Warner. Of course everyone must have known about class, but it evidently wasn't thought of as parallel to those conflict-producing distinctions that prevailed in Europe, and so to talk of class and power in the United States, as for example C. Wright Mills did, was considered somehow daring. In any event, for American social science, if not for Americans, it was a new theme.

Similarly, to write about the continuing significance of ethnicity in the 1950's was to do something new. After Samuel Lubell's *The Future of American Politics* and Will Herberg's *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, no one could be entirely innocent about the continuing significance of ethnic affiliations. Ordinary people had in any case not been innocent on this matter. They had taken ethnicity for granted. Now we are surrounded by a flood of literature on American ethnicity, and in view of the fact that Jewish defense agencies and Jewish sociologists have contributed so heavily to it, Jews can hardly complain. But as this literature expands, I find myself beginning to wonder whether those older leaders of the Jewish community who were not uniformly in favor of more and better publicized information about ethnicity may not have been right after all.

Nowadays government statistics on various racial and ethnic groups and the development of something like racial and ethnic scorecards of relative progress are becoming increasingly common. And it is hardly necessary to report that ethnicity now figures largely in popular discussion, too, as well as in scholarly discussion and in government statistics. I believe it was not until the 1960 Presidential election that it was considered important in public-opinion polls published in newspapers to report the attitudes of different ethnic groups. This has become—along with race and income and age and region—a regularly reported variable. Further, the discussion of specific ethnic groups is now conducted with an openness and directness

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that would have been thought offensive ten years ago.

Is all this a problem? There are a number of respects in which it may be. Consider the consequences of the increasing attention being given to the question of who is ahead and who is behind. Government agencies, operating on an interpretation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which to my mind contradicts its spirit (but an interpretation which has been accepted by the courts and is well enough entrenched to be permanent), themselves operate the scorecards. Their assumption is that any group which is behind is there because it has been discriminated against; by implication, there is the further assumption that any group which is ahead is there not because of *merit or efficiency but because it has been discriminating* against or oppressing others.

This sounds crude, but many judges seem to make just this interpretation; it is also a point of view which is congenial to many other people, if we take the editors of college newspapers, young social scientists, and the representatives of developing nations as examples. Since discrimination may be found legally on the basis of statistics alone, and since the official governmental and legal position is that there is virtually no legitimate explanation for statistical disproportions—that just about any disproportion must be based on discrimination, outlandish as this position is to common sense—a group which has done better than others occupationally and economically will, understandably enough, not be terribly happy about having that fact publicized. When we consider what more euphonious term we might apply to such a group (the indulged, perhaps?), we see the public-relations problem implicit in this development for Jews, who are on the whole well-educated, prosperous, and working in occupations of high prestige. And we also see why "strong" affirmative action, even though it may not hurt the overall economic position of the Jewish community, may yet point to an organizing of public power against a position defined as illegitimate.

This analysis will undoubtedly be taken as an example of Jewish paranoia. Why should Jews only suffer from this attention? Are there not other successful ethnic groups? Yes, there are: Greeks, Armenians, Lebanese, Chinese, and Japanese have all done well in America. But these groups are all small, none of them larger than a few hundred thousand. There are six million Jews in the United States and they form significant concentrations in key professions and sectors of society.

If we use religious instead of ethnic breakdowns, studies show only a few high-status Protestant denominations with anything like the Jewish economic and occupational position. It is not likely that Jews will find much security hiding themselves among the Episcopalians and Congregationalists. There would further appear to be a greater legitimacy in the fact that the descendants of the earliest (white) settlers in this country are prosperous and influential.

And finally, as against other successful groups, religious or ethnic, Jews have played a distinctive role as a target of hostility in Western society. There are good reasons why Jews throughout their history in Western Christendom have preferred to avoid attention.

One may argue about the significance for Jews of the new ethnic frankness. Taken together with yet a third major development, however, there is no question that it is sobering. The third development is that American Jews must ask a very big thing of their country: *they must ask the United States to support* Israel and to do whatever is in its power to see that Israel survives.

There is no large nation in the world that now supports Israel, or that is willing, owing to Arab power and terror, to be seen as a friend of Israel, aside from the United States. Israel is a pariah state, threatened with elimination as a sovereign nation and its people threatened—how can anyone doubt it?—by massacre. Nor can we underestimate the needs of Israel, needs which only the United States can meet. We were recently in the middle of a great debate as to whether Cambodia or South Vietnam should get a few hundred million dollars of additional support. Israel's needs may run to two billion or more. While this figure can be justified—Israel's Arab enemies are receiving arms of the same quality and sophistication at a substantially higher rate—it amounts to not much less than the entire American foreign-aid budget.

This puts American Jews in an exposed and embarrassing position. Whatever policies Israel undertakes now, it is inconceivable that Arab hostility will in the foreseeable future be diminished to a point at which there can be any substantial reduction in the need for arms. And this need, which only the United States can or is willing to meet, arises at a time when Americans are tired of supporting small nations overseas, and find it hard to believe that the benefits of any such policy can be worth the costs.

Thus American Jews are doubly exposed: by the new ethnic frankness domestically, by their need to support with all the influence they possess very heavy assistance for Israel from the United States.

It is not a comfortable position to be in. Jews for the most part have wanted to be like everyone else. Indeed, ironically, the establishment of Israel was an effort to make Jews like everyone else: they would now have a state; they would no longer be an odd, homeless people, but a people like all other peoples. It has not worked out that way. Israel has made Jews more, not less, exceptional. No other state is the object of such nearly universal execration. No other state knows that

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losing a war means its destruction and disappearance. The pariah people, it seems, have simply succeeded in creating a pariah state. In America, the Jews have never been a pariah people, but the special situation of Israel forces them into a politically unique situation. It will no longer do any good to point to the fact that the Irish also love Ireland, the Poles Poland, the Greeks Greece. These nations demand little from their ethnic kinsmen overseas, and they thus demand little from the United States. Even American Greeks, who are just now as passionate about Greece as Jews are about Israel, want nothing from the United States except that it should stop sending arms to Greece's enemy.

Is THIS picture overdrawn? Mass-media treatment of the Middle East in recent months suggests to me it is not. It is no longer the case that Israel has a good press in the United States, surprising as that may seem when one considers that Israel is an open, democratic society with an almost unparalleled measure of social justice and with a record of remarkably good treatment of its Arab minority, even though this minority must inevitably be considered closely allied to the movements and states that are attempting to destroy Israel. After all, the United States, under a much lesser threat, and with no evidence connecting the Japanese Americans with subversion, removed that entire group from the West Coast in World War II and confined it in relocation camps. Israel is opposed by dictatorships, one-party states, and authoritarian regimes (leaving aside Lebanon, which is not a "confrontation state"), whose accomplishments are meager and whose record in oppressing their own peoples, opposition parties, and minorities is great. That these regimes should now be presented by *Time* magazine, by major columnists in the New York *Times* and contributors to its Op-Ed page, and by commentators on the national TV news programs as moderate, desirous of peace, and understandably concerned only with the recovery of conquered lands, while Israel is presented as—the word has apparently now been permanently tacked to the Jewish state—intransigent, is startling.

Time's treatment is particularly antagonistic. Israel's government was not "bold enough to make more concessions to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who had risked his political reputation in the Arab world by undertaking the bilateral talks. . . . U.S. diplomats praised the Egyptian President for his apparent willingness to compromise and roasted Rabin as a weak premier. . . . As political analyst Milton Viorst last week noted in the Washington *Post*, 'What Sadat offered Israel was, in a word, his body.' . . . 'What else could we do? Give everything for practically nothing?' With these rhetorical questions, Israel's Premier Yitzhak Rabin defended his country's stance. . . ." (April 7, 1975). The following week, Egypt's reopening of the Suez Canal—from which Israeli cargoes, in a direct breaking of a commitment undertaken by Egypt when the United States forced Israel from the Canal—was treated as an act of statesmanship, Israel's response as petulance: "'It means nothing to Israel,' snapped Premier Yitzhak Rabin. . . ." (April 14, 1975). In its next issue *Time* continued praising Sadat's statesmanship and reported: "Israelis complained that Sadat was being less than beneficent. . . ." (April 21).

James Reston has apologized for his astonishing reference, in one of his New York *Times* columns, to Israel's "aggression" in the 1967 war, but on March 26 he wrote ". . . when [Kissinger] reported to about twenty leaders of the Congress on what had happened in his negotiations, he found that the reaction was violently anti-Israel." Reston was reporting what Kissinger had told him; but his *Times* colleague William Safire was able to perceive that after all this was what *Kissinger* had told Reston, and was clearly in Kissinger's own self-interest. Evidently, James Reston was unable or unwilling to muster the minimal perceptiveness to see this point himself. Meanwhile the chief outside contribution to the *Times* Op-Ed page on the breakdown of the negotiations was by Egypt's representative to the United Nations (April 9, 1975).

Israel of course suffers from being an open society. All its peccadilloes can be reported in full, while the crimes committed by Syria and Iraq against Jews living in those countries lead a shadowy and mysterious existence. "Arab Family in Jerusalem Faces Eviction," reads a full-page story with picture in the New York *Times* of April 10, on what seems to be a case of urban renewal (I am against the injustices of relocation in urban renewal, too), while the murder of four young Jewish women trying to escape impossible conditions in Syria and the subsequent arrest of *Jews* as responsible for the crime by the cruel government of Syria receives no such coverage.

And Israel suffers from the need of newspapers and international organizations to be "balanced" and "evenhanded": "Amnesty Group Charges Abuse of POW's by Israel and Syria" (New York *Times*, April 10). Evenhandedness upon evenhandedness, leading simply to falsehood. The Amnesty International report—which we may be sure was already carefully balanced—says, according to the accompanying news report, that "some" of the Israeli charges of brutality had been corroborated by medical examinations, and "one" of the Syrian charges had; that "Israeli prisoners were denied visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross for nearly five months"—direct statement of fact—while "Syrian POW's in Israel alleged that they had been denied opportunities to see Red Cross delegations. . . ." One would think that the task of a reporter might be

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to go behind such phrases to the story they both suggest and conceal. No, instead: "Amnesty Group Charges Abuse of POW's by Israel and Syria."

The American people and its elected representatives are still, surprisingly, considering the brainwashing by their leaders and the major media, pro-Israel. As we know from other cases, intellectuals and the media can be surprisingly mercurial and can change their minds very rapidly: ordinary people are much stabler, they still like Israel and are suspicious of China. We should not count on this for long, however. Popular opinion in international affairs generally follows the lead of official opinion. And the issue is not opinion alone. The fact is that the defense of Israel's freedom is expensive, at a time when there is no political support for spending money to defend other peoples' freedom, and a good deal of doubt that such expenditures can be effective.

Is there any way of meeting the new situation? Whatever policies and stances Jewish organizations and individual Jews may adopt—and there will be many—I believe it is important that they be based on principle rather than on the simple expression of Jewish self-interest or the demonstration, as it is sometimes put, of "muscle." I am afraid that some Jews have learned the wrong lessons from the turmoil of the 1960's. They seem to think that Jews have been too quiet, not loud enough, not angry enough, not annoying enough, insufficiently offensive. Since these were the tactics of certain black and other minority militants, and since the new ethnic frankness seems to legitimate demands simply on the basis of self-interest and political threats, shouldn't Jews follow suit? But this idea represents a crude vulgarization of our understanding of ethnic politics. If the position of blacks and other minorities is now much better than it was in the early 1960's, it is not only because they and their allies called attention to their situation and organized their political resources. The minorities also made an effective appeal to principles they shared with other Americans—principles demanding equal treatment and concern for the poor—and it is because those principles existed that the minorities were able to make progress, however much some analysts may deceive themselves that it was threat and power alone which improved their position. The strong may come to the aid of the weak because it is in the self-interest of the strong, or because the weak are troublesome, but primarily they do so when their own principles—the things they themselves believe in and hold dear—call upon them to act.

It is this element in a possible defense strategy for Jews that to my mind has been insufficiently developed: an analysis of the principles we all as Americans hold in common, and an emphasis on the hope those principles offer for Jews and Jewish interests in the present situation.

Thus in the domestic area most Americans continue to believe that every individual should be free to improve his lot in life by his own efforts; they have been and are skeptical of a leveling egalitarianism and of ideologies which see wealth and earnings as theft, or individual effort and merit as illusions. Jews should appeal to those beliefs in individual freedom, effort, and merit, not simply because they are good for Jews, but because they are good in themselves, because they are good for the United States, because they are the best principles on which a good society can be organized. Thus Jewish opposition to "strong" affirmative action should be based not on its presumed effects on the economic position of Jews, but on the ground that no individual should be penalized because he or she is a member of any particular group.

No one should underestimate what a substantial educational task is required here, for as we have seen, a very different view of differential achievement now prevails in the government anti-discrimination agencies, the courts, and the colleges and universities (though not, I think, among ordinary people in general). Jews, first and not least of all among themselves, must try to correct the enormous error that differential achievement is entirely a consequence of discrimination. Certainly it will not be possible for Jews to argue effectively that their economic position is fairly won if they do not firmly believe it themselves.

The task becomes even greater when it is broadened to include strengthening the common principles of the American polity that would justify the heavy involvement of the United States in the defense of Israel. These principles are clear enough: the United States defends democracies, and it defends the independence of small, threatened nations. Pragmatic considerations of course must govern the degree to which we do those things, and it was on the basis of such pragmatic considerations that I for one opposed our military intervention in Vietnam from the beginning. South Vietnam was a threatened small nation, and while certainly not as democratic as Israel, it did possess more of the institutions of freedom than North Vietnam, which possessed none. It had an independent press, even if that press was subject to censorship and reprisal; it had independent political parties, even if they suffered under the heavy hand of an authoritarian and military government; it had an elected parliament that reflected real interests, whatever the distortions that occurred in elections. However, it was obvious very early on that a good part of its territory was already in the hands of the North Vietnamese, and that the kind of aid the United States could supply—advice, bombing, troops—was incapable of rooting them out, or of establishing a stable and effective government in South Viet-

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nam, and was doing enormous damage to boot.

The situation in Israel is quite different—and here I speak of the pragmatic aspects justifying its defense, rather than its degree of democracy, which places Israel among the small handful of nations in the world today that can be called truly free. Israel has a stable government, with the population totally committed to its authority and legitimacy; it completely controls its own territory; it is an efficient government, without the corruption and personal self-seeking that made the provision of effective support to South Vietnam so difficult. The Jewish task is not only to emphasize how different Israel is as a state from South Vietnam, but also—and with more help from the Israelis themselves—to envisage alternative futures that would permit the American people and its representatives to see some end to the heavy support they are asked to provide for Israel.

There is another pragmatic issue Jews should consider: whether it might be possible to increase the regular level of contributions by American Jews, so that less is asked of the American taxpayer. The actual income of American Jews would permit more (a billion dollars—more than is raised now—would amount to about $167 for every Jew in the country).

But if one part of the Jewish task must be to stress the pragmatic possibilities for Israel's survival, and another must be to take on as much of the enormous economic burden as possible, the main job is to argue for and defend the principles which are the only lasting basis for United States support of Israel: that the United States is committed to the independence of free nations, and of democratic nations most especially. One of our problems is that so many American opinion leaders no longer believe this, and that so few of our young people ever did. They believe instead that the United States is imperialistic and counterrevolutionary, and that any nation which receives American support must be imperialistic itself. Just as it is necessary, therefore, to argue that Israel, because it is an endangered democratic nation, is worthy of American support, it is also necessary to argue that Israel does not become unworthy *because* it receives American support. Thus the Jewish task involves arriving at and spreading a proper understanding of American foreign policy in these past ten difficult years, too.

The United States, it must be pointed out, did not maintain good relationships with authoritarian states because it preferred authoritarian states to democratic ones: our relationship with Spain was necessary because we needed bases to protect Western Europe from Soviet Russia; our relations with Salazar's Portugal stemmed from the same necessity; our willingness to support militaristic regimes in Greece and maintain them as part of the Western alliance had the same origin and the same reason. Our suspicions—warranted and unwarranted—of democratic regimes, where we have been suspicious (the Dominican Republic, Chile), were based on fears that they would fall to Communist rule, in which case any chance of freedom and democracy would disappear. Recent developments in Portugal suggest that not all such fears are imaginary or based on an exaggerated hysteria over Communism.

American policy, whether misguided or not in specific circumstances, has been based on a large commitment—obvious to anyone with eyes to see—to support of the free world, a term which we must learn again to pronounce without apology: as if there can be any comparison in degrees of freedom as between Europe west and east of the Oder-Neisse line, or Asia within and outside the sphere of Communist control! Of course at every point there were problems of judgment, and many of these judgments may have been wrong. I believe some were. But these erroneous judgments, we must realize, were in the service of freedom and democracy, not imperialistic control and dictatorship. The ten-year agony over Vietnam, the radicalization of many of our young people, and the rise of a revisionist social science have combined to obscure these simple truths: it appears strange and strident even to write them out. But can they really be denied?

It is primarily on the basis of this large commitment to the defense of freedom wherever such a defense seems to bear a reasonable chance of success—not because six million Jews were killed by the Nazis, not because Jews, too, can, like others, scream and place bombs in inconvenient places, and not because it is in the American interest as a great power to support Israel (for that also can be disputed)—that Jews should argue for a continuation of American support of Israel. Jews must appeal to generally held principles which assert that democracies are better than authoritarian and totalitarian states, and that small nations should not be overwhelmed by larger neighbors with greater force. These principles are still firmly held by most Americans: it is only because they are that we can in the end expect the United States to stand with Israel rather than, as most of the rest of the world now does, against it.

The fact that American Jews are exposed means in effect that they are now shivering in a cold wind, in the eyes of everyone, vulnerable because they have been more fortunate than some other groups, and because they must ask from their fellow citizens heavy support for a small and gravely endangered nation. One of the chief Jewish responses to this new and uncomfortable position must be to reeducate themselves and others in the principle that individuals and nations alike both have a right to freedom.

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The New Despotism

Robert A. Nisbet

WHEN the modern political community was being shaped at the end of the 18th century, it was thought by its founders that the consequences of republican or representative institutions in government would be the reduction of political power in individual lives. Nothing seems to have mattered more to such minds as Montesquieu, Turgot, and Burke in Europe and to Adams, Jefferson, and Franklin in this country than the expansion of freedom in the day-to-day existence of human beings, irrespective of class, occupation, or belief. Hence the elaborate, carefully contrived provisions of constitution or law whereby formal government would be checked, limited, and given root in the smallest possible assemblies of the people. The kind of arbitrary power Burke so detested and referred to almost constantly in his attacks upon the British government in its relation to the American colonists and the people of India and Ireland, and upon the French government during the revolution, was foremost in the minds of all the architects of the political community, and they thought it could be eliminated, or reduced to insignificance, by ample use of legislative and judicial machinery.

What we have witnessed, however, in every Western country, and not least in the United States, is the almost incessant growth in power over the lives of human beings—power that is basically the result of the gradual disappearance of all the intermediate institutions which, coming from the pre-democratic past, served for a long time to check the kind of authority that almost from the beginning sprang from the new legislative bodies and executives in the modern democracies. The 18th-century hope that people, by their direct participation in government, through voting and office-holding, would be correspondingly loath to see political power grow, has been proved wrong. Nothing seems so calculated to expand and intensify the power of the state as the expansion of electorates and the general popularization of the uses of power.

Even so, I do not think we can properly explain the immense power that exists in modern democracies by reference solely to the enlargement of the base of government or to the kinds of parliaments Sir Henry Maine warned against in his *Popular Government*. Had political power remained *visible*, as it largely did down until about World War I, and the manifest function of legislature and executive, the matter would be very different. What has in fact happened during the past half century is that the bulk of power in our society, as it affects our intellectual, economic, social, and cultural existences, has become largely *invisible*, a function of the vast infragovernment composed of bureaucracy's commissions, agencies, and departments in a myriad of areas. And the reason this power is so commonly invisible to the eye is that it lies concealed under the humane purposes which have brought it into existence.

The greatest single revolution of the last century in the political sphere has been the transfer of effective power over human lives from the constitutionally visible offices of government, the nominally sovereign offices, to the vast network that has been brought into being in the name of protection of the people from their exploiters. It is this kind of power that Justice Brandeis warned against in a decision nearly half a century ago: "Experience should teach us to be most on guard to protect liberty when the governments' purposes are beneficent. Men born to freedom are naturally alert to repel invasion of their liberty by evil-minded rulers. The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachments by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding."

What gives the new despotism its peculiar effectiveness is indeed its liaison with humanitarianism, but beyond this fact is its capacity for entering into the smallest details of human life. The most absolute authority, wrote Rousseau, "is that which penetrates into a man's inmost being and concerns itself no less with his will than with his actions." The truth of that observation is in no way lessened by the fact that for Rousseau genuinely legitimate government, government based upon the general will, *should* so penetrate. Rousseau saw correctly that the kind of power traditionally exercised by kings and princes, represent-

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ed chiefly by the tax collector and the military, was in fact a very weak kind of power compared with what a philosophy of government resting on the general will could bring about. Tocqueville, from a vastly different philosophy of the state, also took note of the kind of power Rousseau described. "It must not be forgotten that it is especially dangerous to enslave men in the minor details of life. For my part, I should be inclined to think freedom less necessary in the great things than in the little ones, if it were possible to be secure of the one without the other."

Congresses and legislatures pass laws, executives enforce them, and the courts interpret them. These, as I have said, are the bodies on which the attentions of the Founding Fathers were fixed. They are the visible organs of government to this day, the objects of constant reporting in the media. And I would not question the capacity of each of them to interfere substantially with individual freedom. But of far greater importance in the realm of freedom is that invisible government created in the first instance by legislature and executive but rendered in due time largely autonomous, often nearly impervious to the will of elected constitutional bodies. In ways too numerous even to try to list, the invisible government—composed of commissions, bureaus, and regulatory agencies of every imaginable kind—enters daily into what Tocqueville calls "the minor details of life."

Murray Weidenbaum, in an important study of this invisible government, *Government Mandated Price Increases,* has correctly referred to "a second managerial revolution" that is now well under way in American society. The first managerial revolution, described originally by A. A. Berle and Gardiner C. Means in their classic *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* and given explicit identity by James Burnham, concerned, as Weidenbaum points out, the separation of management from formal ownership in the modern corporation. The second managerial revolution is very different. "This time," writes Weidenbaum, "the shift is from the professional management selected by the corporation's board of directors to the vast cadre of government regulators that influences and often controls the key decisions of the typical business firm." Weidenbaum concerns himself almost entirely with the business sector—pointing out incidentally that this whole cadre of regulation is a by now deeply embedded cause of inflation—but the point he makes is just as applicable to other, non-business areas of society.

In the name of education, welfare, taxation, safety, health, and environment, to mention but a few of the laudable ends involved, the new despotism confronts us at every turn. Its effectiveness lies, as I say, in part through liaison with humanitarian rather than nakedly exploitative objectives but also, and perhaps most significantly, in its capacity to deal with the human will rather than with mere human actions. By the very existence of one or another of the regulatory offices of the invisible government that now occupies foremost place, the wills of educators, researchers, artists, philanthropists, and enterprisers in all areas, as well as in business, are bound to be affected: to be shaped, bent, driven, even extinguished.

Of all the social or moral objectives, however, which are the taking-off points of the new despotism in our time, there is one that stands out clearly, that has widest possible appeal, and that at the present time undoubtedly represents the greatest single threat to liberty and social initiative. I refer to equality, or, more accurately, to the New Equality.

II

"THE FOREMOST, or indeed the sole, condition required in order to succeed in centralizing the supreme power in a democratic community is to love equality or to get men to believe you love it. Thus, the science of despotism, which was once so complex, has been simplified and reduced, as it were, to a single principle."

The words are Tocqueville's, toward the end of *Democracy in America,* in partial summary of the central thesis of that book, which is the affinity between centralization of power and mass equalitarianism. Tocqueville yielded to no one in his appreciation of equality before the law. It was, he thought, vital to a creative society and a free state. It was Tocqueville's genius, however, to see the large possibility of the growth in the national state of another kind of equality, more akin to the kind of leveling that war and centralization bring to a social order. It is only in our time that his words have become analytic and descriptive rather than prophetic.

There is a great deal in common between military collectivism and the kind of society that must be the certain result of the doctrines of the New Equalitarians, whose aim is not mere increase in equality before the law. In fact this historic type of equality looms as an obstacle to the kind of equality that is desired: *equality of condition, equality of result.* There is nothing paradoxical in the fondness of equalitarians for centralized power, the kind that the military best evidences, and the fondness of centralizers for equality. The latter, whatever else it may signify, means the absence of the kinds of centers of authority and rank which are always dangerous to despotic governments.

Equality of condition or result is one thing when it is set in the utopian community, the commune, or the monastery. The Benedictine Rule is as good a guide as we need for the administration

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of this kind of equalitarian order, small enough, personal enough to prevent the dogma of equality from extinguishing normal diversity of strength and talent. For countless centuries, everywhere in the world, religion and kinship have been contexts of this kind of equality; they still are in theme.

Equality of result is a very different thing, however, when it becomes the guiding policy of the kind of national state that exists in the West today—founded in war and bureaucracy, its power strengthened by these forces throughout modern history, and dependent from the beginning upon a degree of leveling of the population. We may have in mind the ideal of equality that the monastery or family represents, but what we will get in actual fact in the modern state is the kind of equality that goes with uniformity and homogeneity—above all, with war society.

Tocqueville was by no means alone in his perception of the affinity between equality and power. At the very end of the 18th century Edmund Burke had written, in *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* of the passion for leveling that exists in the militant and the military: those, he wrote, "who attempt to level, never equalize." The French revolution, Burke believed correctly, was different from any revolution that had ever taken place before. And the reason for this difference lay in its combination of eradication of social diversity on the one hand and, on the other, the relentless increase of military-political power that expressed itself in the timeworn fashion of such power. All that tended toward the destruction of the intermediate authorities of social class, province, church, and family brought simultaneously into being, Burke noted, a social leveling and a transfer to the state alone of powers previously resident in a plurality of associations. "Everything depends upon the army in such a government as yours," he wrote; "for you have industriously destroyed all the opinions and prejudices, and, as far as in you lay, all the instincts which support government." In words prophetic indeed, since they were written in 1790, Burke further declared that the crisis inherent in "military democracy" could only be resolved by the rise of "some popular general who understands the art of conciliating the soldiery, and who possesses the true spirit of command." Such an individual "shall draw the eyes of all men upon himself."

The theme of military democracy, of the union of military and social equality, was strong in certain 19th-century critics. We see it in some of Burckhardt's writings, where he refers to the future rise of "military commandos" in circumstances of rampant equality. We see it, perhaps most profoundly, in James Fitzjames Stephen's *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,* though what is most evident in that remarkable work is much less the military, save by implication, than the implacable conflict Stephen discerned between equality and liberty. There were others—Henry Adams in America, Taine in France, Nietzsche in Germany—who called attention to the problem equality creates for liberty in the modern democratic state. Nor were such perceptions confined to the pessimists. Socialists such as Jaurès in France saw in the citizen army, based upon universal conscription, an admirable means of instilling in Frenchmen greater love for equality than for the liberty associated with capitalist society.

It is evident in our day how much more of a force the ethic of equality has become since these 19th-century prophecies and prescriptions were uttered. Two world wars and a major depression have advanced bureaucracy and its inherent regimentations to a point where the ideology of equality becomes more and more a means of rationalizing these regimentations and less and less a force serving individual life or liberty.

No one will question the fact that a higher degree of equality now exists in Western countries than at any time in the past. This is true not only of equality of opportunity and legal equality, each of which became a burning issue by the early 19th century, but of the more generalized equality of economic, political, and social *condition.* It is result, not opportunity, that is today the central perspective in equalitarianism; and that ideological fact is itself part of the larger reality of an extraordinary achievement of equality of condition or result, at least by the standard given us by history. Nor is there anything strange in the intensification of equalitarianism in such an age as ours, for, on the evidence of the history of social movements, powerful agitation in behalf of some social or moral value comes only when the surrounding social order can be seen to reflect that value in at least some degree, commonly only recently accomplished.

Equality has the great advantage of being able to draw upon both religious and political energies. It is only in the religious and political realms indeed that the cry for equality has been heard historically—much more often in the former than the latter, prior to the age of the French revolution. Whatever else equality is, it is a spiritual dynamic. Major social movements require such a dynamic, irrespective of whether they are primarily religious or political at the core. It is not so much the surrounding material conditions as it is this inner spiritual dynamic that in the long run determines, though by means which are complex and still inadequately understood, what the outcome of an issue will be. I think it would be hard to exaggerate the potential spiritual dynamic that lies in the idea of equality at the present time. One would have to go back to certain other ages, such as imperial Rome, in which Christianity was generated as a major historical force, or Western

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Europe of the Reformation, to find a theme endowed with as much unifying, mobilizing power, especially among intellectuals, as the idea of equality carries now.

Equality has a built-in revolutionary force lacking in such ideas as justice or liberty. For once the ideal of equality becomes uppermost it can become insatiable in its demands. It is possible to conceive of human beings conceding that they have enough freedom or justice in a social order; it is not possible to imagine them ever declaring they have enough equality—once, that is, equality becomes a cornerstone of national policy. In this respect it resembles some of the religious ideals or passions which offer, just by virtue of the impossibility of ever giving them adequate representation in the actual world, almost unlimited potentialities for continuous onslaught against institutions.

Affluence is a fertile ground for the spread of equalitarian philosophy, for the pains of affluence manifestly include in our age the pain of guilt over the existence of any and all inequalities. It is not enough, as we have been discovering, to create equality before the law—at least to the degree that this is ever possible—and to seek legal equality of opportunity. Vast systems labeled affirmative action or open admissions must be instituted. And then, predictably, it is discovered that even these are not enough.

The reason for this is plain enough. Equality feeds on itself as no other single social value does. It is not long before it becomes more than a value. It takes on all the overtones of redemptiveness and becomes a religious rather than a secular idea.

Like other historic religious ideas, and also ideas of political character, equality has an inherent drive that carries it well beyond national boundaries. The proper abode of equality, like any other redemptive idea, is all mankind, not simply this or that parochial community. We are already in the presence of this universalizing state of mind in discussions of equality. It is not enough that classes and groups in the United States, or in the West, should become equal. The entire world, especially the Third World, must be brought in. Yet simple arithmetic suffices to prove the impossibility of either the United States or the West extending its resources to this Third World—particularly in light of the population increases which would become inexorable and, also, the present spread in these countries of an ideology, Russian or Chinese in source, that, as the present record makes only too clear, reduces what productive power is presently in existence.

But it is the nature of providential ideas like equality that they are stayed by neither fact nor logic. They acquire a momentum of their own, and I can think of few things more probable than the spread of equalitarianism in the West—not despite but because of its manifest irrationality as the sovereign objective of national and world policy.

III

THE significance of equalitarianism in our day is made all the greater by the profound affinity that exists, and has existed for many centuries, between equality and the distinctive nature of the Western state from the time of the Cleisthenean reforms at the end of the 6th century B.C.E. Those revolutionary changes put an end to the inequalities of traditional kinship society in Athens and ushered in the polis. Excepting only, as we are obliged to here, the class of slaves, a high degree of equality was instituted among the Athenian citizens. This equality was, of course, in part a function of the central power that was also inaugurated in the polis, a power that cut, often destructively, through all the intermediate loyalties which had been handed down from the most ancient times. Athenian equality, in sum, is comprehensible only in light of the leveling which resulted from political extermination of the traditional kinship diversity of Athenian society.

Neither Plato nor Aristotle liked equalitarianism, though there is assuredly an equality of sorts within the class of guardians that Plato creates to govern his utopian Republic. But like it or not, both Plato and Aristotle perforce gave equality a higher place than could be imagined in the minds of earlier Greek thinkers such as Heraclitus or statesmen such as Solon. Aristotle, who disliked intensely Platonic communism, nevertheless thought that some degree of equality of wealth was a prerequisite for political stability.

With rare exceptions, the Western philosophy of the political state has carried from that time to ours an imposing emphasis on the desirability of equality. The reason for this lies, in the first instance, in the nature of the power that has gone with the Western state since the Greeks. This power—sovereignty, as it is commonly called—seeks to go directly to the individual. The great difference between the Western state during the past twenty-five hundred years and the traditional state of Asia—as Karl Marx was one of the first to note—lies in the contrasting relation they have to the individual. In China, India, and other Eastern societies prior to the present century, governments reigned, as it were, but did not rule. Their claimed powers were at times certainly as centralized and bureaucratized as anything to be found in the West, but these powers almost never touched individual lives directly. Between the power of the government and the life of the individual lay strata of membership and authority—clan, village, caste, temple—which were almost never penetrated by the ruler or his bureaucracy. It was possible, in short, for the Asiatic state to exist for thousands

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of years in the presence of, as a superstructure of, a nonpolitical society founded on kinship and locality that was the real center of human life in matters of authority, function, and responsibility.

Very different has been the Western state. Omitting only the Middle Ages—and even then the *idea* of the centralized state remained vivid to those acquainted with Greek and Latin—the Western structure of political power has been a process of almost permanent revolution against the social groups and authorities which lay intermediate between individual and state. By virtue of its inherent centralization, its definition in terms of territory rather than social or religious function, its prized doctrine of sovereignty through which the state's power is declared superior and supervening to all other powers, the Western state's very existence in the ancient world and in the modern since the Reformation has represented a kind of built-in war against traditional society and its ingrained authorities.

In its struggle for individual allegiance the Western state has, in a very real sense, actually manufactured individualism. It has done this not merely as a result of the negative attitude political rulers since Cleisthenes have taken toward social, religious, and economic groups which seemed to be competing with the state, but, perhaps more crucially, in the positive creation of individual rights, freedoms, and benefits. Say what one will of the unique power of the state and of its all-too familiar capacity for extending this power bureaucratically into the lives of countless human beings, creating coercions and invasions of autonomy all the way, the fact remains that the central power of the state has also been associated with some resplendent gains in liberty and welfare. It is no exaggeration to say that from the time of Pericles, through Alexander the Great, the Caesars, and down to the Cromwells and Napoleons of modern history and also the more centralizing of American Presidents from Andrew Jackson to Lyndon Johnson, a great many such gains have come directly from the use of central power. It was after all the central power of the American government, not the local or regional powers of communities and states, that brought about first the abolition of slavery in the United States and then, slowly but surely, increased civil rights for blacks and other minorities.

It is for this reason, no doubt, that the state in the West has attracted to itself what can only be called a clerisy of power. I refer to the long succession of philosophers and intellectuals from Greek and Roman times to our own who have made the political state the temple, so to speak, of their devotion. Religion is the only other value system that has had its clerisy—older than the political clerisy but, in modern Western civilization, possessed of much less power and influence. No other institution comes to mind that has won itself a clerisy as have religion and politics. Not until the early 19th century did economists come into existence in their own right, and it is hard to find in economic writings any of the sense of redemptive passion that is so common in religious and political works. It is possible, though I am skeptical, that technology today has a clerisy in the sense in which I use the word here. There is surely no other.

Through most of the history of Western civilization the political clerisy has given itself to the needs and values of the state, just as its great rival, the religious clerisy, has to those of the church. Each clerisy has produced its titans—St. Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, on the one side; Plato, Hobbes, Rousseau, on the other—as well as its vast ranks of lesser minds, its ordinary intellectuals and technicians. The political state can be seen to be a temple in Rousseau quite as much as the church is a temple in Augustine.

It is Tocqueville who, so far as I know, first made the relation between equality and power a principle not only of political sociology but of the philosophy of history. "In running over the pages of our history," Tocqueville writes in the Introduction to *Democracy in America*, "we shall scarcely find a single great event of the last seven hundred years that has not promoted equality of condition." The Crusades, the introduction of firearms, the rise of the infantry, the invention of movable type in printing, the Protestant Reformation, the opening of gates to the New World: all of these, Tocqueville notes, had been attended by a leveling of medieval ranks and a spreading equality of economic, political, and intellectual condition.

But equality is only half the story that Tocqueville gives us, not only in *Democracy in America* but also in his classic study of the old regime and the French revolution. The other half of the story is, of course, centralization of power. In the same Introduction he writes: "I perceive that we have destroyed those individual powers which were able, singlehanded, to cope with tyranny; but it is the government alone that has inherited all the privileges of which families, guilds, and individuals have been deprived. . . ."

Centralization and equality: these are for Tocqueville the two dominant tendencies of modern Western history, with the relationship between them functional. All that has magnified equality of condition has necessarily tended to abolish or diminish the buffers to central power which are constituted by social classes, kindreds, guilds, and other groups whose virtual essence is hierarchy. As Tocqueville—and before him Burke—perceived, some degree of inequality is the very condition of the social bond. Variations among individuals, in strength, intelligence, age, aspiration, ability of whatever kind, and aptitude, will

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always tend toward the creation of inequality of result. Only through operation of a single, centralized structure of power that reaches all individuals in a community, that strives to obliterate all gradations of power, rank, and affluence not of this power's own making, can these variations and this inequality be moderated.

This is clearly the reason that all the great modern revolutions, with the single and mixed exception of the American, have presented the by now often described spectacle of enormous increases in governmental authority. Never mind the motivational value of the catchwords freedom and justice; the unfailing result of European revolutions, culminating in the Communist and Nazi revolutions of this century, has been immensely greater use of political power.

Not least of the reasons for this has been, of course, the role equalitarianism has played in these revolutions. For all European revolutions have been founded upon assault against the kinds of inequality which are the lineal products of the Middle Ages. The real issue was not capitalism but the lingering remnants of feudalism, even for the revolutions in this century which have taken place in the name of socialism. But the thrust toward equalitarianism inevitably led to a disintegration of old social unities, and only the power of the state was left to fill this vacuum.

The conditions for the spread of equality as a motivating value have been very fertile during the past two or three centuries. Populations have grown hugely; local and regional boundaries have eroded away in large measure, thus exposing many inequalities which had been concealed behind these boundaries. Industrialism, with its own machine-based disciplines, has done much, as Marx realized more vividly than anyone before him, to diminish inequalities, to concentrate them, as it were, into the single inequality between capitalist and worker. The immense spread of consumer goods, their cheapness of price, has also done much to bring about a generalized equality of patterns of living, at least as measured against earlier patterns in the West. And finally, as I have noted, there has been the incessant spread of centralized power, whether in the hands of king, military, or the people, during the past two centuries, to spread further equality by virtue of this power's destructive effects upon social and economic differentiation.

In one of his excellent essays, the British political scientist Kenneth R. Minogue refers to the "suffering-situations" which modern history so abundantly reveals. These either are in fact or can be rendered into a fairly widespread, standardized kind of situation calling for sudden and heroic action, invariably political action. I think inequality will prove to be the single greatest suffering-situation of our age. As one thinks of it, one sees that feudalism and capitalism were regarded in earlier times as suffering-situations by large numbers of intellectuals concerned with political power. The word "feudal" did not come into existence until the 17th century, and when it did it took on almost immediate pejorative significance. By almost all of the key minds of the 17th and 18th centuries, feudalism was regarded as infamous; its localisms, decentralizations, and divisions of power were made tantamount to anarchy and evil. We would not, surely, have seen the central power of the national state increase as greatly as it did in these two centuries had there not been something large and evil, by designation at least, for the state to cope with. The *philosophes'* common liking for highly centralized political power had behind it in great part their loathing of everything "feudal."

In the 19th century "capitalism" replaced feudalism as the important suffering-situation. Modern radicalism was to a great extent formed around hatred of capitalism, and while not all radicals, by any means, gravitated toward the national state as the means of redemption, we find just about all of them, save only some of the anarchists, profuse in their appreciation of revolutionary centralization of power. If any single thing identifies the modern radical mind, it is the invariably negative reaction to private enterprise, profit, and competition. And just as the national state aggrandized itself in the 17th and 18th centuries at the expense of authorities which could be labeled feudal, so has the national state in the 19th and 20th centuries further aggrandized itself, in powers claimed and in bureaucracy, by virtue of the controls and restraints it has placed upon capitalist enterprise. That the controlling boards and agencies quickly become dominated by representatives of the very industries and channels of commerce they are supposed to regulate, leading to even greater exploitation of consumer and public, is a fact well attested by this time, but not one that ever enters the minds of legislators and others when some alleged suffering-situation leads to the creation of still another regulatory agency.

I am inclined to think that "capitalism" is in our time becoming as moribund, as archaic, a term as "feudalism." What is surely succeeding these is "inequality," though there are some serious observers of the present scene who believe that "technology" comes very close in this respect. There is no doubt that the powers of government have become greatly increased in very recent years on the basis of undoubtedly well-intentioned proposals for the regulation of technology, which so many of poetic or romantic disposition have seen as suffocating to the human spirit. Even so, the evidence is clear, I think, that inequality is the great suffering-situation of the late 20th century. In its name power will increase drastically; it already has!

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IV

SOMETHING more must be said about the mind that above any other I can think of exerts profound influence upon the New Equalitarians in the present age. Rousseau is, as conservatives and anarchists alike came to realize in the early 19th century, the representative of the special kind of power that is inherent in the modern, centralized national state. He is, I believe, the single most radical political mind in the West after Plato—whom Rousseau adored and regarded as the first of his intellectual masters. Only Marx exerts the kind of effect Rousseau has today upon the radical mind.

His influence is more than political in the ordinary sense. He is the real source of that subjectivism of political and social consciousness that has been growing steadily ever since the appearance of his major writings in the late 18th century. Not only in radical ideology, but in large sectors of education, psychology, literature, philosophy, and the social sciences, his distinctive blend of worship of self and of power conceived as community is all too apparent.

What gives Rousseau currency in so many areas of thought on man and the state is his extraordinary combination of emphasis upon the ego and power—the power that lies in the General Will. This is the will of the people, but only of a people that has been cleansed, so to speak, of all the corruptions and prejudices which lie in the historic social order. Equality is the very essence of Rousseau's political community; but it is the kind of equality that exists when every form of association and every social value that could possibly rival the General Will have been exterminated. Equality of result is the great and overarching aim of Rousseau's political writings. Freedom too, if we like; but, as nearly all commentators have stressed, Rousseau's is a very special kind of freedom which is virtually indistinguishable from the equalitarian political community. No one knew better than Rousseau the intensity of political power that would be required to create equality in the political order. It is in this light that one of the New Equalitarians, Christopher Jencks, writes in our day:

> If we want substantial redistribution we will not only have to politicize the question of income equality but alter people's basic assumptions about the extent to which they are responsible for their neighbors and their neighbors for them. . . . As long as egalitarians assume that public policy cannot contribute to economic equality directly but must proceed by ingenious manipulations of marginal institutions like the schools, progress will be glacial. If we want to move beyond this tradition, we will have to establish political control over the economic institutions that shape our society.

But in actuality such control will almost certainly have to go beyond strictly economic institutions and values, which are the express concerns of most proposals today for equality of condition. For, as Rousseau realized so prophetically, once equality has been made the dominant value of a social order, it must, and will, reach toward cultural, social, educational, even psychological spheres of human life, for it is in these that the real consequences of economic inequality are most deeply felt. We have Rousseau's *Confessions* as witness of the fact that, in his own life, it was less the occasional poverty he experienced that gnawed at him than the subtler gradations of prestige, influence, and power he encountered when he made his way to the Paris of the Sorbonne, the glittering salons where brilliance of conversation was so much prized, and the *philosophes*, whose intellectual superior Rousseau was in most respects but whose general love of the *haute monde* he found repugnant.

Moreover, Rousseau realized, and stated eloquently in his *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, that the springs of egoism, ambition, and desire for social eminence lie deep in human nature as it has been formed over the long period of man's history following the original instituting of private property and the rise of the agricultural and mechanical arts. All of man's ills, his torments and subjections to oppression, originated, Rousseau tells us in the second *Discourse*, with inequality, when with private property there appeared "social interdependences" which made inequality of status fixed and inevitable. Given the length of mankind's history since the early "fatal departure" from natural equality, it is evident that corrective measures must be encompassing and powerful. Men may want equality, once its virtue is made evident to them, but more than simple popular desire by majorities is required to root equality securely in human nature. Hence Rousseau's call, in the *Social Contract*, for a Legislator, as Rousseau calls him, who will not hesitate to remake human nature itself in the pursuit of equality:

> He who dares to undertake the making of a people's institutions ought to feel himself capable, so to speak, of changing human nature, of transforming each individual who is by himself a complete and solitary whole, into part of a greater whole from which he in a manner receives his life and being. . . . He must, in a word, take away from man his own resources and give him instead new ones alien to him, and incapable of being made use of without the help of other men.

Elsewhere Rousseau tells us with the candor that is so typical of his political writings that "if it is good to know how to deal with men as they are, it is much better to make them what there is need that they should be. The most absolute au-

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thority is that which penetrates into a man's inmost being, and concerns itself no less with his will than with his actions."

How well Rousseau knew! He records in his *Confessions* that from an early age he had become aware of the fact that men are entirely what their form of government makes them. Hence there must be no reluctance in the uses of power, the power, especially, that lies at the core of the absolute, total, and unremitting General Will. If we would have virtue, Rousseau wrote electrically in his *Discourse on Political Economy*, we must be willing to *establish* it!

WESTERN society is rarely lacking in those who, in one way or other, religious or political usually, are obsessed by the mission of establishing virtue. Most clearly, the West is not lacking now in such individuals. And in our time, by a rising number of persons, chiefly intellectuals and politicians, virtue is defined solely and exclusively as equality; again, let it be emphasized, equality of condition or result.

And there is no want either of ingenuity or cleverness in demonstrating that virtue is equality —nothing less, nothing more. Undoubtedly the most highly praised work in philosophy of the past decade or two is John Rawls's *Theory of Justice*. Although there is excellent reason to believe that the almost ecstatic response to it will shortly abate among professional philosophers, it is certain that this book will be for a long time to come the central work in moral philosophy for the clerisy of power. It is tailor-made for the needs of those to whom equalitarianism and central power are but two sides of the same coin.

Justice, we discover, is for Rawls "fairness," which is surely a reasonable definition. What is a good deal less reasonable is the author's further conclusion that justice and fairness are—equality! And for John Rawls, as for all others in the cult of equality, equality has little to do with historic equality before the law. Through two dubious rhetorical techniques which he labels "the original position" and "the veil of ignorance" Rawls seeks to demonstrate that all men of reason and good will, when liberated from the misconceptions and prejudices of the social order they live in, will easily reach the conclusion that society is built on the rock of equality; that is, equality of "social primary goods," the economic, cultural, political, and even psychological attributes which are so variously distributed in society as the result of equality of opportunity and equality before the law. Social primary goods, which may be stretched to include even "bases of self-respect," are to be made equal, or at least equitable, through what he calls "the difference principle."

This principle means simply that there shall be no inequalities of "social primary goods" in society unless it can be demonstrated that such inequalities are in the interest of the less advantaged. There must be no differences among individuals in social position, the fruits of knowledge, talent, and enterprise, as well as in income and property, except insofar as superior possession among some can be demonstrated to redound to the welfare of others. This, succinctly stated, is Rawls's difference principle.

The mind boggles at the thought of the political apparatus necessary to give expression to and to enforce such a principle. Rawls seems not to have heard of political bureaucracy, but even if he had, he would no doubt take refuge in his stated principle that the "liberty" of each individual is primary, not to be violated by interests of utility or expediency. Liberty, however, turns out to be for Rawls very much what it is for Rousseau: mere equal shares of something *called* liberty which bears little relation to the autonomies and immunities which are the true hallmarks of liberty. Equality is the dominant value in Rawls.

The New Equalitarians of our day seem to detest the central elements of the social bond quite as much as Rousseau did. I refer to the whole tissue of interdependences—interactions, conflicts, coercions, conformities, protections, and disciplines—which are the molecules of social order. It is with good reason that our equalitarians detest such interdependences, for, in whatever degree or form, inequality is the essence of the social bond. The vast range of temperaments, minds, motivations, strengths, and desires that exists in any population is nothing if not the stuff of hierarchy. When associations are formed for whatever purpose, cooperation and mutual aid included, inequality is immediately apparent. Even the New Equalitarians would presumably balk at the thought of holding all musical talents to the same limits; and no doubt they would feel the same way with respect to academic and intellectual talents. It is the "economic" they have in mind. But, as I have said, it is cultural, psychological, and social inequality that galls once equality is declared the ascendant ideal. Rousseau detested the arts and sciences, just as he did all social interdependences, seeing correctly that in these areas inequality is impossible to contain.

Inevitably there is opposition to kinship. The family, final enclave of political and economic privacy, is correctly perceived by the New Equalitarians as the most powerful barrier to the redistribution of goods and statuses which is called for in their strategy. In this they are also in harmony with Rousseau, who did not hesitate, in the final pages of the *Discourse on Political Economy*, to recommend virtual abolition of the family, chiefly as a means of separating the children from what Rousseau described as the "prejudices" of the fathers. There were a number of radical equalitarian movements in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that frankly proposed that children be

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separated from family at a very early age and brought up in state-operated schools. Only thus, it was believed, could the family's inherently destructive effect upon the ideal of the accomplishment of mass equality be offset.

There is much less awareness of this vital necessity among present-day New Equalitarians, or, if there is in fact awareness, much less courage and forthrightness in recommending abolition of the family. It is much easier to concentrate upon private property as the target, not giving emphasis to the well-attested fact that wherever there is private property there will be a strong family system. After all, the origins of private property lie in clan and kindred; and even after the conjugal family, the household, became the chief element of kinship, its relationship to property remained very close. As Joseph Schumpeter noted in his *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, it was not the isolated individual, so dear as an abstract concept to the classical economists, but the household that was the main engine of modern capitalist development. Not economic man but, quite literally, the head of the household working for the present and future of the members of his family, and hence saving and investing, in however small degree, is the central figure in the capitalist drama, as in all earlier forms of economy.

Unquestionably it is this fact that will offer the New Equalitarians their greatest single challenge. For, although equality is a prestige-laden word in contemporary Western society, it is largely the more traditional types of equality—in law and economic opportunity—which are the referents. Individuals at all levels may at times burn with the sense of injustice where the multiple rewards of social life are involved—social and cultural as well as economic—but it is far from certain that a mandatory redistribution would only issue in choice, would wish for a generalized policy of equality, whether of income or anything else. The realization is too strong that, given the immense range of aptitudes, desires, aspirations, strengths, and motivations in any population, any genuine effort to offset this range by a national policy of mandatory redistribution would only issue in novel forms of inequality: those which result when differently endowed human beings are obliged to submit to a single measure of result. Ordinary majority will in democracy, then, can hardly be counted upon, certainly at the present time, to support and give acquiescence to the kind of equality that is dreamed of by those members of the clerisy of power who have result and condition, not law, in their minds.

All of this is true; but we are living in strange and frightening times. Whereas majority will, merely polled by Roper or Gallup, might very well even today register strong opposition to the New Equality, the blunt fact is that an operating and motivated majority will shows clear signs of becoming one of the casualties of the decline of the political habit of mind, of the revolt against politics in any and all of its forms.

The politics of virtue, from Plato to Bentham, has rarely if ever corresponded with emphasis on majority will any more than it has with emphasis on historic individual rights and immunities before the law. Plato thought majority will in the good state as absurd as in matters of mathematical truth. Rousseau made a careful, and absolutely vital, distinction between majority will as such, which he termed the mere "will of all," and the General Will which might or might not, Rousseau candidly states, be congruent with what a simple majority might wish at any given time. It is interesting to note that in *Theory of Justice*, while not actually abrogating majority will in a democracy, John Rawls has given it a somewhat lower status among the crucial verities than certain other elements of his just society.

I have perhaps paid too much attention to the writings of the New Equalitarians, for, ascendant though they assuredly are at the present time in the intellectual world, and fertile though they will undoubtedly prove to be in the preparing of political manifestoes and platforms, there is no more reason to believe they will be crucially responsible for egalitarian tendencies in the future than their intellectual forerunners—socialists, social democrats, progressives—have been in the past.

If we plot the development of social equality in Western society over the past few centuries, we find that it follows almost perfectly the development of centralization and bureaucratization in the political sphere. Even more strikingly, the development of equality follows the trajectory of war. It is in periods of national, mass warfare that we observe the greatest advances of the egalitarian ethic in many areas. The point is that even if no egalitarian ethic existed, if there were not the vein of equality in the modern Western mind that there so plainly is, the mere existence of political and military centralization in the modern world would have brought about pretty much the same patterns of equality we see around us.

My own estimate is that a good 75 per cent of all the national programs which have been instituted in Western countries during the past two centuries to equalize income, property, education, working conditions, and other aspects of life have been in the first instance adjuncts of the war state and of the war economy. Equality is far from least among the qualities which go with social and economic programs of nationalization during times of war.

"EVERY central power which follows its natural tendencies," wrote Tocqueville, "courts and encourages the principle of

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equality; for equality singularly facilitates, extends, and secures the influence of a central power." And it was Thomas Jefferson who observed that the state with power to do things *for* people has the power to do things *to* them.

I do not say that the ethic of equality necessarily leads to the demand for absolute power. Philosophers, like the rest of us, are entitled to be taken at their word, and, however naive the New Equalitarians may be in their common indifference to problems of political power, we cannot justly accuse them of wishing to bring about either military socialism or political absolutism. Moreover, there are ages in history when diffuseness of power, fragmentation, and the concomitant forms of local oppression and inequality are so great that even the most ardent libertarian could properly wish for an increase in central political power and the leveling of ranks in society that goes with it. The West has seen such ages. Nor will we soon forget the morally repugnant inequality of legal right imposed upon the blacks right down to very recent times. I do not see how anyone who prizes a free and creative culture could oppose the extension of the forms of equality which have been, over and over, the crucial circumstances within which long-oppressed minorities have broken free and given their talents to the arts, the sciences, politics, and other areas of leadership.

But the evidence is clear enough that we are looking well beyond legal equality in many circles today, and a very different kind of equality is becoming ever more widely prized. With it, or with such achievements of this kind of equality as have been thus far a part of the social order, goes a degree of political power and of political intrusion into once autonomous areas that a rising number of persons will, I am convinced, find odious. Ongoing experience with certain programs of equalitarianism—affirmative action, mandatory busing to achieve ethnic quotas, open admissions, among others—certainly suggests this. All other things being equal, it is more than likely that popular opposition to such programs would increase and even become successful.

Alas, all other things are not equal. For the equalitarianism of such programs is only one facet of a much larger reality: the existence of a bureaucratized welfare state that prizes uniformity above all other things and that, as a large number of recent instances suggest, will stop at nothing to enforce this uniformity. Uniformity is prized by all bureaucracies, political or other, simply because it saves bureaucrats from the always agonizing responsibility of dealing with the individuality and the complexity of real life.

There is a measure of equality without which any community must suffer. And although I would not rank equality among the very highest of the West's moral values—not as high, assuredly, as liberty and justice—its ethic is no mean one. The tragedy in our time is that what is good in the ethic of equality is fast becoming swamped by forces—of power above all—which aim not, really, at equality in any civilized sense but at uniformity, leveling, and a general mechanization of life.

There is, obviously, inevitable conflict with liberty. I mean the kind of liberty that goes with differentiation, variety, individuality, and a very wide spectrum of social and psychological traits; the kind of liberty that is involved in all creative work, whether in the arts and sciences or in the economic sphere. It is nonsense to say that the pupil in public school today has the same freedom to learn that was once present before uniform programs took command in the country, as the result of the ever-greater penetration of the school system by the federal government and its central bureaus of education. Given these conditions and also the constantly increasing emphasis upon equal grading, or upon no grading at all, with differences between the bright and dull wiped out symbolically, how could there possibly be the freedom to learn that is always stimulated by visible incentive?

There is, to be sure, another kind of freedom that does not suffer from the spread of equalitarianism: the kind best seen in totalitarian societies; the kind that is divisible into equal shares irrespective of the talents and motivations of those holding these shares. The Russian and Chinese governments are scrupulous in their attention to this kind of mass freedom, for there is nothing to worry about in the way of consequences. What such governments do have to worry about is the kind of freedom that is simply impossible to divide equally among a people: the freedom to be creative. The problem of the intellectual, the artist, and the scientist in contemporary Russia is evidence enough of the strain presented to a social order by this kind of freedom, which is inherently incompatible with any kind of equality except equality before the law and of opportunity.

V

It is extremely unlikely that political power could be as encompassing of life, as penetrating of privacy, were it not for certain changes in the nature of power. If I were to seize upon a single phrase for these changes it would be "the softening of power." The power of the state is no less—indeed it is far greater—than it was even during the divine-right monarchies. But where the exercise of power over individual life was then nakedly coercive, commonly brutal in infliction, and above all direct and personal, the same exercise of governmental power is today blander, more indirect, engaged in the immobilization of the human mind when possible rather than in the infliction of corporal punishments. A

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great deal that is commonly ascribed to popular welfare, to humanitarianism, even to increase in individual freedom, might better be ascribed to the softening of power, through organization, technology, social work, psychiatry, equalitarianism, and various other techniques and values whereby the impact of government upon human life has been lessened in the experiencing, all the time that political control of human life has vastly increased.

We have been recently made aware of profound changes in the nature of power in Soviet Russia. Rare today are the brutality, torture, and terror which were so manifest in the Age of Stalin. Rare too are the public trials before state tribunals which in the 1930's were means not only of exterminating declared enemies of the state but of terrorizing the public at large. I think it is exceedingly unlikely that we shall see again in the world the kind of direct, naked use of force on large numbers of persons which the governments of Stalin and Hitler brought to such heights. Very probably Stalinist and Nazi concentration camps, torture chambers, and death camps represent a watershed in the history of the use of power by government over individual lives. For it is notable that even the Nazi government felt it necessary so to organize the torture and destruction of Jews and others as to conceal so far as was possible these enormities from the German public. To a lesser extent, that was true of Stalin's Russia as well. Once, in almost all nations of the world, such torture and execution, far from being in any degree concealed, would have been flaunted before the public. I am inclined to think that the advances of humanitarianism during the past century or two, together with advances in technology which have made possible a liberation, through drugs and machinery, from the incidence of pain our ancestors knew, have combined to give people a very different attitude toward the visible infliction of cruelty and brutality.

"NOT MANY people," writes Sir Dennis Gabor in *The Mature Society*, "could stand the sight of a tumbril moving slowly through the streets, with the delinquent tied to a stake, and the executioner with the brazier next to him digging the red hot poker into the screaming wretch." Indeed they could not; not today. Yet a surprisingly short time separates us from ancestors who not only could stand it, but who solemnly regarded such spectacles, along with public hangings and floggings, as indispensable to the maintenance of order. We do not have to go very far back in Western history to find otherwise humane and gentle minds in perfect composure at the sight of floggings, drawings and quarterings, and flayings which it is unlikely that more than a tiny handful of the pathological could today bear the knowledge—much less the sight—of as public policy.

In substantial part, as Sir Dennis observes, the changed attitude toward the more brutal uses of power by governments has come from the changed place of physical pain in almost all human lives. It is difficult, in our age of pain-preventives and pain-liberators, to realize the extent to which physical pain was once commonplace. It is rather horrifying today to read of the agony that was once the unavoidable accompaniment of a long list of diseases, not to mention injuries and disabilities of one kind or other. And, as Sir Dennis well notes, in a society in which physical pain is the common lot, there is not likely to be the same reaction to, the same perception of, pain deliberately inflicted upon individuals either for amusement's sake or for the protection of society. A social order that could, in its lower classes, find diversion in the frequent spectacle of bloody, knock-down, eye-gouging, nose- or ear-mutilating fights—among women as well as men, we read of the English 18th century—would not be likely to react as we do to the torturing, flogging, and hanging of miscreants.

That kind of society has almost wholly disappeared in our time, and with it the shape of punishment and of power. But such transformation of police or governmental power in no way means that such power has lessened. It can mean actual increase, especially if power is disguised as a form of therapy. The relative absence of Stalinist torture and mass murder in Russia does not mean that a power vacuum now exists. No doubt the memory in the older generation of Stalinist terror is sufficient to restrain dissident impulses, but, as we have recently been made aware, the art and technology of therapy, so called, have become in present-day Russia the commonest guise of power over the unruly or dangerously creative. Techniques lumped in the public mind under the label "brainwashing" have manifestly assumed far greater use in the totalitarian countries than would once have been thought either desirable or necessary by their rulers.

It is not as though such uses of power had not been foreseen—by Huxley, by Orwell, and before both by Samuel Butler in *Erewhon*, a utopia in which the delinquent and criminal were put in hospitals. It is a commentary on the time we ourselves live in that we are less likely to find Erewhon as humanitarian as our Victorian ancestors might have, for we are too well aware of the employment today of hospitals and other contexts of therapy for the express purposes of punishment and overt behavior control.

It would be comforting if power-as-therapy were confined to the totalitarian societies, but it is not. As I write, there has just been released a 651-page report by Senator Sam Ervin's subcommittee on constitutional rights which describes in great detail the number and variety of projects,

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mostly sponsored by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, whose essence is the control of behavior through drugs and related means. Alcoholics, shoplifters, child molesters, and homosexuals are, the report states, but a few of those on whom therapy is being used, often in clear violation of constitutional rights, as a means of alteration of mind and behavior. "There is a real question," Senator Ervin is quoted as saying in connection with release of the report, "whether the government should be involved at all in programs that potentially pose substantial threats to our basic freedoms."

Dr. Thomas Szasz has been writing eloquently for years now on the extent to which legal pleas of insanity and mental inadequacy, with consequent commitment of individuals to asylums rather than jails, have intruded into the once sacrosanct area of individual ethical responsibility. Our villains have vanished along with our heroes, and each disappearance is related to a spreading state of mind that sees less and less responsibility devolving upon the individual for his acts. The same overall set of mind that snatches the chronic rapist or the mass murderer from the ranks of villainy and places him among the mentally disturbed is likely to remove the occasional great man or woman from the ranks of heroism and subject this individual instead to relentless examination of private life and to public exposure. Not a Washington or a Lincoln, surely, would have been able to maintain the image of greatness in circumstances such as those the media, the social sciences, governmental investigative agencies and committees, have created.

The greatest power, as major political theorists from Plato to Rousseau have declared, is that which shapes not merely individual conduct but also the mind behind that conduct. Power that can, through technological or other means, penetrate the recesses of culture, of the smaller unions of social life, and then of the mind itself, is manifestly more dangerous to human freedom than the kind of power that, for all its physical brutality, reaches only the body. We shrink today from the infliction of physical pain upon our contemporaries—except, that is, in time of war, and even then we prefer the kind that is dealt out at thirty thousand feet in bombs to the kind revealed at My Lai—but we do not shrink from projects in government, in the social and behavioral sciences, and in the media by which mind and spirit are invaded and thus affected by power, in however soft a form.

Privacy is an excellent litmus test, it would seem, for the actual state of freedom in a culture. I do not think many people would argue seriously that the extent of individual privacy today is even close to what it was a few decades ago. The exposure that Governor Rockefeller was required to make of economic, family, and personal life—and, I think, much more could have been required without serious outcry—during the consideration that followed his nomination to the Vice Presidency would have once been utterly inconceivable. So gross a violation of privacy would surely have converted our political heroes of the past, from Washington to FDR, into beings of somewhat less than heroic mold. I am aware that a strong case can be made for the propriety and safety (to public weal) of detailed penetrations of economic and political privacy. But we shall, I think, find that an equally strong case will shortly be made in justification of identical invasions of sexual and other equally intimate recesses of privacy.

Large-scale government, with its passion for equalitarian uniformity, has prepared our minds for uses of power, for invasions of individual privacy, and for the whole bureaucratization of spirit that Max Weber so prophetically identified as the disease of modernity. We do indeed see, and take a measure of comfort in, certain liberties of an individual kind in the realms of the theater, publishing, and public speech which our ancestors did not know. Rights to obscenity, pornography, public display of body and mind, and others of related character exist which were once absent. If these are in some way connected with the larger structure of freedom, especially political freedom, and might even be reckoned forces in the long run toward ending the kinds of invasion of privacy which governmental, military, and paramilitary agencies now represent, we can perhaps overlook the crudities and vulgarities which such rights so plainly carry with them.

It is well to be reminded, though, that more often than not in history license has been the prelude to exercises of extreme political coercion which shortly reach all areas of a culture. That is one observation that history makes possible. Another and related one is that very commonly in ages when civil rights of one kind are in evidence —those pertaining to freedom of speech and thought in, say, theater, press, and forum, with obscenity and libel laws correspondingly loosened —very real constrictions of individual liberty take place in other, more vital, areas: political organization, voluntary association, property, and the right to hold jobs, for example.

I believe it was Napoleon who first sensed the ease with which, in modern society, the illusion of freedom can be created by strategic relaxation of regulations and law on individual thought, provided it is *only* individual, while all the time *fundamental economic and political liberties* are being circumscribed. The real barriers to the kind of power Napoleon wielded as emperor are not *individual* rights so much as the kinds of rights associated with autonomy of local community,

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voluntary association, political party. These are the real measure of the degree to which central political power is limited in a society. Neither centralization nor bureaucratized collectivism can thrive as long as there is a substantial body of local authorities to check them. But on the other hand there is no reason why a considerable degree of individual freedom cannot exist with respect to such matters as sexual conduct, speech, writing, and religious belief without serious impact upon the structure of political power. There are, after all, certain freedoms which are like circuses. Their very existence, so long as they are individual and enjoyed chiefly individually as by spectators, diverts men's minds from the loss of other, more fundamental, social and economic and political rights.

A century ago, the liberties which now exist routinely on stage and screen, on printed page and canvas, would have been unthinkable in America—and elsewhere in the West, for that matter, save in the most clandestine and limited of settings. But so would the limitations upon economic, professional, educational, and local liberties, to which we have by now become accustomed, have seemed equally unthinkable a half century ago. We enjoy the feeling of great freedom, of protection of our civil liberties, when we attend the theater, watch television, or buy paperbacks. But all the while we find ourselves living in circumstances of a spread of military, police, and bureaucratic power that cannot help but have, that manifestly does have, profoundly erosive effect upon those economic, local, and associative liberties which are by far the most vital to any free society. From the point of view of any contemporary strategist or tactician of political power, indulgence in the one kind of liberties must seem a very requisite to diminution of the other kind. We know it seemed that way to the Caesars and Napoleons of history. Such indulgence is but one more way of softening the impact of political power and of creating the illusion of individual freedom in a society grown steadily more centralized, collectivized, and destructive of the diversity of allegiance, the autonomy of enterprise in all spheres, and the spirit of spontaneous association that any genuinely free civilization requires.

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Translating the Ancients

David Stern

In a letter to Gershom Scholem, Franz Rosenzweig once remarked, "Only one who is profoundly convinced of the impossibility of translation can really undertake it." Rosenzweig's paradoxical statement hit upon a deep truth about translation—that it is the art of failure. The exact nature of that failure varies from one translation to the next, and depends in part on whether the translator has chosen to be faithful to the literal reading of the original text, to its precise words and idioms, or to be faithful to its sense and spirit. No translator, to be sure, can ever wholly reproduce the original literal meaning, or for that matter the original spirit. But while it is often easier to cling to the literal, and to be eluded by the spirit, the translator who attempts to convey sense alone is commonly more faithful to *his* sense of the text than to its author's. Just what Ezra Pound meant when he wrote to W. H. D. Rouse, the translator of Homer, "Tain't what a man sez, but wot he *means* that the traducer has got to bring over," becomes clearer when one reads Pound's own translations; his version of Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* is pure, 100 per-cent Pound.

As Rosenzweig understood, however, the "impossibility" of translation is not a reason for not undertaking it, and in no way diminishes the role translation has played in the history of Western culture. Since the early Middle Ages, the greatest classics of Western literature have been known to the vast majority of their audiences through translation; this has been especially true of the three seminal works, the Bible and Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The sheer frequency of their translation testifies to the constantly renewed urge that these works be transmitted from the distant past to contemporaneity. And it is an urge that continues unabated today. The Bible, of course, has been translated more than any other book, and for the obvious reasons; in this century alone, and into English alone, there have been at least ten new translations, including one by each of the major Christian denominations, and two by the Jewish Publication Society of America. While the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* have been read far less widely, the number of their English translations in this century is no less astonishing—among them, Richmond Lattimore, Albert Cook, and Robert Fitzgerald in verse; W. H. D. Rouse, E. V. Rieu, and T.E. Lawrence in prose.

This numerousness is not easily explained, although on one obvious level it probably reflects an increased demand for accurate, readable versions of the classics in college humanities and world literature courses. But the rage to translate the Bible and Homer represents more than an attempt to fill a market, spiritual or academic. Especially in the case of the Bible, recent translations have specifically endeavored to restore to the text something of its former authenticity, to recapture an accurate understanding of the original Hebrew by incorporating the vast archaeological and linguistic discoveries that have recently illuminated, and largely substantiated, the details of the biblical narrative. Numerous philological discoveries have elucidated many passages previously obscure, while the various hypotheses of documentary and form criticism, and even those of oral theory, have been able to identify the diverse stylistic strands in the narrative and to suggest possible origins for them.

Greater linguistic and historical accuracy is one of two claims usually made for the translations that have appeared in this century. The other is that they are more readable, meaning basically that archaisms have been eliminated and that "thou" has been changed to "you." Yet while readability, like accessibility, is certainly a crucial factor in any translation, in the case of the Bible a major obstacle faces any new English translation. For the Bible has already been supremely well translated once into English, and the prospective translator must always ask himself: can I do it better? This is not merely a question of ability, for the King James Version of 1611, aside from reflecting the genius of the Elizabethan age, has exercised an almost unparalleled influence upon the development of English prose and has indelibly stamped its diction upon what will always be felt as the English counterpart to the biblical style. Virtually all subsequent translations into English have, not surprisingly, been

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either revisions of the King James or loyal dissenters from it. Even the one translation which has most radically departed from the diction of the King James, the New English Bible, lies mainly in the valley of its shadow, proving there just how far the diction of contemporary English has declined since its acme in the 17th century.

The New English Bible offers a striking example of the dilemma confronting the contemporary translator. Published between 1961 and 1970 under the auspices of the Church of England, the NEB was compiled by three panels of biblical scholars—one each for the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament—and a fourth panel of "trusted literary advisers." The need for separate literary and scholarly panels already indicates a certain disjunction between biblical science and literary culture. The King James Version was also composed by some forty scholars, working in six "companies," yet it can be safely said about them that, unlike the translators of the NEB, they shared a conviction of the sacredness both of the book and of their task, which made them worshippers as well as translators. The NEB, on the other hand, is ridden with the sins of translation by committee (although its transgressions are more glaring in the New Testament than in the Old). Consistently striving to adhere to contemporary English, and deliberately eschewing "hallowed associations," the translators miss the fact that, as Reuben Brower has noted, "divinity, like poetry, depends for its power in some degree on being imperfectly understood." In attempting to restore a historical and linguistic accuracy to the Bible, along with a prose style of pedestrian clarity, the NEB mainly succeeds in underlining the loss of spiritual veracity which the Bible has suffered in the modern age.

The same can be said, though to a lesser extent, of nearly all recent translations of the Bible in European languages, with one major exception: Martin Buber's and Franz Rosenzweig's translation of the Old Testament into German. Recently an English version based on their translation has been undertaken by Everett Fox, of which two parts, *In the Beginning* and *Yona*, have so far appeared.*

Buber and Rosenzweig, who began their work together in 1925, and later Buber alone, after Rosenzweig's death in 1929, initially intended only to make a revision of Martin Luther's monumental 1534 translation; subsequently, however, they undertook a completely new work. Their translation, as well as the theory of Bible translation which they developed, was based upon a fundamental insight into the history of the Bible. There have existed two Bibles, they reasoned; one, the Old Testament, is essentially a Christian document, the predecessor to the New Testament and primarily a written document, a Scripture, in which the original Hebrew has been all but effaced. This Bible was not the one which Buber and Rosenzweig set out to translate: their text was the Hebrew Bible, which they saw less as a book than as "the voice" of God. The basic thrust of their translation was to reach the extreme limit, perhaps, of literalness: not so much to translate the Bible from Hebrew into German as to make the German language replicate the original Hebrew, to render it as foreign, and Hebraic, as possible, and to make it "speak" in terms no less "unconditional" than those in which, they claimed, the Hebrew Bible had spoken to its original audience. Buber and Rosenzweig were sensitive to the discoveries which documentary criticism had made by their time, but their translation was specifically an attempt to restore a spiritual veracity to the Bible and to return it to the Jewish people as their national, religious possession. Rosenzweig himself was fond of saying that he did not doubt the existence of a biblical editor, whom scholars had designated "R" (Redactor), but for him the initial stood for *Rabbenu*, our teacher.

Buber's and Rosenzweig's vision of the Bible was grounded in a remarkably astute perception of the historical reality of the Bible within the Jewish tradition. For where the Christian Bible has almost always been a document already in translation—as early as the 7th century, Jerome's Latin Vulgate was the authorized text for nearly the entire Church—for Jews the Hebrew Bible has never yielded theological primacy even when rabbinical authorities have recognized the need for translations into other tongues, as in the cases of the Aramaic Targum or the Greek Septuagint. For the Jew, in short, the Bible has always been Torah, the Law.

In order to differentiate their translation from its Christian opposite number, Buber and Rosenzweig also devised some technical peculiarities: the removal of chapter-and-verse notations, on the grounds that these were medieval Christian inventions; the use of, and emphasis upon, transliterated Hebrew names—hence their title for the book of Genesis, *In the Beginning*, a translation of the Hebrew *Bereshit*; and finally, the organization of the text into "cola," that is, lines embodying a rhythmic unity, arranged in a form similar to free verse, which the translators hoped would convey both the spoken and rhetorical features of the Hebrew document.

IN REINCARNATING the Buber-Rosenzweig translation, Everett Fox has adopted both the theological underpinnings of his predecessors' work and their stylistic deviations. His effort faces a number of special difficulties—first among them the fact that he is translating into English and not into German, a language whose particular syntax and word-

* "In the Beginning: An English Rendition of the Book of Genesis," *Response*, Summer 1972; "Yona: An English Rendition," *Ibid.*, Summer 1974.

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formations allow much greater room for violence than does English with its more rigid and simpler constructions. The major difficulty with this translation, though, is not the limitations of the English language but Fox's own lack of command of it, as well as the poverty of his diction. Consider his version of the Creation:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Now the earth was confusion and chaos.
Darkness over the face of the maelstrom.
Rushing-spirit of God soaring over the face of the waters.

God said: Be there light! There was light.
God saw the light: that it was good.
God divided between the light and the darkness.
God called to the light: Day! and the darkness he called: Night!
Evening was and morning was: One day.

What is wrong here is not the literalness of the translation, or its intention, which is to push the English syntax into the shape of the Hebrew, but that it succeeds in accomplishing neither. The "now" in the second line is not in the Hebrew, while the fifth and the final lines are neither Hebrew nor English. It would, perhaps, have been interesting had God said, "Be there light!" but He did not. And what difference is there, really, between "Let there be light!" and "Be there light!" except that one is English, while the other is not?

The faults of this passage, and its general lack of distinction, are present throughout much of the initial chapters of Fox's translation, along with several more embarrassing renditions: at one point God commands, "Let the waters under the heavens be blocked-up to one place," which is television language, evoking an image of cosmic nasal congestion; again, after the murder of Abel, God addresses Cain, "The voice of your brother's bloodline cries out to me from the ground"; and immediately prior to the Flood, after Noah, his family, and the two pairs of all living flesh enter the ark, "He closed up after him."

THESE lapses in diction are reminiscent of the NEB: both reveal an inability to find a rhythm and style appropriate to a sacred text. In Fox, however, the beginning is the worst. As the book becomes less cosmogonic and more narrative, less concerned with God and more with the lives of the patriarchs, Fox's translation begins to show just how effortlessly a literal version, in which the translator is all but invisible, can capture the original. The passages describing Eleazar's encounter with Rivka and Joseph's with his brothers are particularly vivid. Fox is also more successful when he borrows from Buber and Rosenzweig those principles through which they attempted to demonstrate that the meaning of the text, once emptied of the theological concepts which encrusted it over the centuries, is contained in the repetition of words, or word-stems, and their sound. In his version of the conclusion of the story of the tower of Babel, Fox skillfully makes the English both capture the repetitions of the Hebrew and do its own work:

HE went down to see the city and the tower
which the sons of men had built.
HE said:
Here, one people is this and one tongue for all
of them, and this is only the start of their doing—
henceforth nothing will be too steep for them of
all that they desire to do.
Come-now! let us go down and let us baffle their tongue,
so that no more will a man hearken to the
tongue of his fellow.
HE scattered them from there over the face of
all the earth,
so that they had to cease building the city.
Therefore its name was called Bavel/Babble,
for there HE had baffled the tongue of all the earth,
and from there HE had scattered them over the
face of all the earth.

The repetitions and punnings on baffle/Bavel/Babble/baffled explicate the original language—almost perform a kind of exegesis—and organize the narrative into an integral, self-contained unity.

By far the most successful passages in the entire translation are those recounting Jacob's blessing to his sons:

Yehuda, you,
you your brothers will thank . . .
He squats, he crouches,
like the lion,
like the lioness,
who shall rouse him up?
The scepter shall not retire from Yehuda,
nor the judging staff between his feet,
until comes that which is for him—
for him the sway of peoples . . .

Dan
will serve his people in judgment,
as but one of Yisrael's branches.
Dan will be a serpent by the wayside,
a horned viper on the path,
who bites the heels of the horse,
and the rider is thrown backward . . .

Benyamin,
a wolf that tears-to-pieces.
In the morning he devours his prey,
then, in the evening, partitions the spoil.

Here, Fox has actually succeeded in pushing the English to its extreme, into the shape of the Hebrew: one can almost hear the *trop*, the traditional melody with which the Torah is chanted in the synagogue.

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II

ALTHOUGH the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* have never possessed the theological authority of the Holy Scriptures, they have served as a kind of secular, this-wordly Bible to which successive generations have consistently brought their deepest values for confirmation and criticism. But whereas in English the King James Version of the Bible has never been superseded in three-and-a-half centuries, there are many exceptionally accomplished translations of the Homeric poems that also stand as embodiments of the most enduring values of their respective literary cultures. Homer has been imagined and recreated in as many different aspects as each age has imagined its own self—hence, no single translation has ever remained definitive. To the Renaissance, Homer offered the archetypical representation of pagan humanism; to the Enlightenment, he epitomized the pagan barbarism from which Reason had liberated mankind, as he was also the truest expression of the divine nature of poetry and pre-rational mythopoesis; in the 19th century, and especially for Matthew Arnold, Homer contained the essence of nobility and "high seriousness."

As conceptions of Homer have changed, so have translations—from Alexander Pope's majestic, high-heroic, and highly inventive *Iliad*, which appeared in the first quarter of the 18th century, to the prose translation of E. V. Rieu in the second decade of this one, with its belief that Homer was no longer viable in poetry. Between Pope and Rieu, the English tradition had undergone a profound, irrevocable change: Pope's *Iliad*, as several critics have noted, appears so supremely confident because his age still possessed the felt experience of the heroic tradition, and was probably the last to consider it a reality.

Since Pope, Western culture has also become increasingly self-conscious, and has come to recognize the historicism of its translations; this may explain both their proliferation and the rapidity with which one generation has dismissed the translations of its predecessors. The history of the judgments pronounced upon Homeric translations offers a brief chronicle of the revolutions in Western cultural taste. Not long after its appearance, the eminent English classicist Richard Bentley pronounced Pope's *Iliad* "a pretty poem but must not be called Homer." About a century later, Matthew Arnold cited Bentley to reject Pope's translation again, but this time primarily on account of overly refined literariness; Arnold's main argument was directed against a translation by Cardinal Newman, which he attacked for being "eminently ignoble," while he himself endorsed the fragments of the *Iliad* which his friend Arthur Clough had translated. Today, Bentley's judgment seems less true than ever—Pope's pure Augustan *Iliad* is certainly more than a "pretty poem"—while Clough's version remains the epitome of high seriousness, and boredom. But perhaps the best illustration of the transient fate of translations is a blurb which still appears on the jacket of Richmond Lattimore's 1951 verse translation of the *Iliad*: "The feat is so decisive that it is reasonable to foresee a century or so in which nobody will try again to put the *Iliad* into English verse." The author of the blurb, Robert Fitzgerald, has now, scarcely twenty-five years later, come forward with his own translation to rival Lattimore's.*

Fitzgerald's encomium to Lattimore will probably prove more accurate of his own attempt: it is difficult to foresee another translation in the next half-century, at any rate, surpassing the skill and achievement of this work. Fitzgerald has come to his task well prepared, both as a poet and as the author of a translation of the *Odyssey* which remains, fifteen years after its appearance, the best modern translation of the epic. In it, Fitzgerald demonstrated his ability to capture the tricks of narrative verse and to render the nuances of Homeric language into contemporary, though not too contemporary, diction; his *Iliad* displays these same talents, and some more.

Although Fitzgerald's translation will almost certainly replace Lattimore's as the definitive one of our time, the differences between the two are worth noting if only because they exemplify the alternatives open to the translator of Homer. Lattimore's translation—which, for all its failures, is still an extremely successful one—strove to be as literal as possible, faithful not only to all Homer's words, to every epithet and stock formula, but also to his meter, the Greek hexameter, which Lattimore tried to reproduce with an English six-beat line. For taking upon himself such heroic burdens, Lattimore deserved high praise; unfortunately, the burdens finally proved too heavy and his translation is alternately relentless and ponderous in the reading. Fitzgerald, by contrast, hardly makes any such demands upon himself: his meter is a very loose, almost free, blank verse; his translation does not commit itself to literalness and often ignores many of the epithets and formulas of the original. Not, however, that his translation is by any means *un*literal; indeed, Fitzgerald has the rare knack of making his reader turn back constantly to the original, or to a translation like Lattimore's, in search of the literal meaning, only to find that Fitzgerald's translation *is* literal.

FITZGERALD'S achievement is all the more remarkable in light of the recent philological discoveries which have radically altered our conception of the Homeric epics and the manner in which they were composed. Since

* *The Iliad*. Translated by Robert Fitzgerald. Doubleday/Anchor, 595 pp., $15.00.

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the middle of the last century, classicists have generally recognized that the Homeric style, with its epithets, set phrases, and unusual dialects, was too complex to have been invented by a single person. Most Homeric scholarship nevertheless focused upon the question of whether the individual epics were single, unified compositions or collections of separate folk "lays" compiled by a skillful, though fallible, editor. Both views were predicated upon the assumption that the Homeric epics were literary works—that is, poems composed by a poet or poets and no different from any other poems except by dint of their unusually high degree of accomplishment.

In the early 1920's, a young American classicist, Milman Parry, challenged and totally altered this view. Basing his work upon earlier French scholarship, and later substantiating it through extensive field work in Yugoslavia, Parry claimed that Homer had been an illiterate "singer" who composed his works in performance, and according to rules wholly different from, even opposed to, those governing written poetry. According to Parry's theory, most, if not all, language in the Homeric poems was formulaic and served a special purpose: through the use of the formula, the singer, in the spontaneity of oral performance, was able to compose a metrical line. Since, furthermore, the selection of epithets or formulas at any given moment was always extremely limited —there are, for example, no more than two or three epithets that can be applied to Achilles or to the sun rising at dawn—the singer, unlike the literary poet, could not possibly be concerned with the specific context of each formula; rather, what was decisive was the larger unit of line and theme. On the basis of his studies in Yugoslavia, where he observed illiterate singers who still composed epic poems in oral performance, Parry was also able to posit the existence of a long oral tradition from which Homer absorbed both his formulaic language and his heroic themes.

Although Parry's theory did not entirely rob Homer of credit for the poems, it did substantially remove the aura of originality from him. But Parry's work, illuminating as it was, did not solve all the problems of the Homeric poems. For one thing, the sheer magnificence of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* still remained something of an enigma; even the best of the Yugoslavian epics which Parry recorded are hardly better than second-rate Homer. More pertinently, the question of how exactly the oral epics come to be written down has also not been fully answered. Not the smallest paradox of Parry's theory was his contention that oral poetry can exist only in an illiterate society, for literacy turns the oral poet into a minstrel who no longer spontaneously composes his song but merely repeats it from memory. Herein also lay the most important implication of Parry's work: that there exist two distinct realms of oral and literary poetry, each distinguished by its own rules and conventions. Parry himself believed that oral poetry was the more "primitive, popular, natural, and heroic" of the two, and that it penetrated the heroic nature in a fashion which literary poetry, with all its nuances and commitments to the private self, could not possibly do.

PARRY'S claims have required a thoroughgoing revision of accepted notions of the Western literary tradition. Since antiquity, it now seems, Western literature has mistakenly looked back upon Homer as its father and original genius. As for the contemporary translator of Homer, the discoveries of oral theory have made his task doubly problematic, if not futile: his job appears less one of translating the poem from Greek into English than of transposing epic song from one medium to another.

Fitzgerald is acutely aware of the difficulties of his task, yet ironically Parry's discoveries appear to have liberated him from the need to be absolutely faithful to the oral poem. Although this *Iliad* remains Homer's, Fitzgerald has recognized that he cannot possibly replicate the original song, let alone its mode of composition, and that his translation must be as different from its original as any literary poem is from an oral one. Yet this circumstance offers today's translator possibilities as rich in their own way as those present to Homer. Just how large is Fitzgerald's awareness of these possibilities emerges in the very first lines of his translation:

> Anger be now your song, immortal one,
> Akhilleus's
> anger, doomed and ruinous
> that caused the Akhaians loss on bitter
> loss,
> and crowded brave souls into the under-
> gloom,
> leaving so many dead men—carrion
> for dogs and birds; and the will of
> Zeus was done.
> Begin it when the two men first contending.
> broke with one another—
> the Lord Marshall
> Agamemnon, Atreus's son, and Prince
> Akhilleus.

This passage exemplifies the energy of Fitzgerald's translation. The inverted syntax of the first line, the repetition of "anger," and the succession of short, abrupt clauses with frequent enjambment—all capture the Homeric rhythm far more cogently than, for example, Lattimore's more literal version, "Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus's son, Akhilleus/ and its devastation." In the pulsating drive of the verse, the nearly imperceptible "now" which Fitzgerald has smuggled into the first line, and added to the Greek, is almost missed, although the word is Fitzgerald's certain acknowledgment of variations in his forthcoming performance of Homer's song.

Fitzgerald cannot call upon the tradition of

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oral poetry, which was Homer's muse, but he does possess, and command abundantly, the resources of his own literary tradition. And to a surprising extent, Fitzgerald is able to accomplish with those resources many of the same results Homer accomplished with his own. Not many lines farther on in the first book of the *Iliad*, there is a line, "along the shore of the loud-roaring sea," containing a word, *poluphloisboio* (loud-roaring) which once heard is never likely to be forgotten; Fitzgerald captures it remarkably well with "by the shores of the tumbling clamorous whispering sea." And at the very end of the poem, there is this description of King Priam mourning for his dead son Hektor—

> The old man
> fiercely wrapped and hooded in his
> mantle,
> sat like a figure graven—

in which both "fiercely" and "like a figure graven" brilliantly explicate the dense meaning of *entupas*, "closely wrapped up," and *kekallumenos*, "covered over." In both translations, Fitzgerald succeeds in registering a disturbance in the original Greek as well as in signaling his own presence to the reader.

Certain aspects of the new light which Parry's oral theory cast on the Homeric style have certainly helped Fitzgerald in his translation. The constant repetitions of the epithets and formulas, for example, which are probably the most familiar features of Homeric language—almost its clichés—and which often appear as mere metrical verbiage, were revealed by Parry to be just that. Fitzgerald, consequently, is correct in ignoring them, or in substituting gentler phrases, although when he does choose to employ them he is able to enliven them in a manner similar to the one familiar to Homer's original audience. Homer describes Achilles numerous times as "similar to the gods," an epithet Fitzgerald usually omits. In the last book, however, when Priam visits Achilles to beg from him the corpse of his son, Fitzgerald has him address the hero, "Akhilleus, in your godlike youth"; here the formula works vividly to emphasize the pathos of the confrontation between the old, aggrieved king and the young warrior who has all but destroyed him and his city.

IN GENERAL, Fitzgerald's version of Homer emphasizes the distance rather than the closeness between the original and himself, the gap between the situation of an oral poet, able to invoke his audience's familiarity with traditional conventions, and the utterly dissimilar situation of a contemporary poet and *his* audience. Yet throughout Fitzgerald demonstrates an undiminished faith in the essential transmissibility of poetry, in its capacity to endure translation as well as time, and a confidence in his own poetic abilities to effect that transmission. Consider, for example, the opening passage of Book III; I will quote Lattimore's literal version first to give an idea of the difficulties facing the translator:

> Now when the men of both sides were set in
> order by their leaders,
> the Trojans came on with clamor and shouting,
> like wild fowl,
> as when the clamor of cranes goes high to the
> heavens,
> when the cranes escape the winter time and the
> rains unceasing
> and clamorously wing their way to the streaming Ocean,
> bringing to the Pygmaian men bloodshed and
> destruction:
> at daybreak, they bring on the baleful battle
> against them.
> But the Achaian men went silently, breathing
> valor,
> stubbornly minded each in his heart to stand
> by the others.
>
> As on the peaks of a mountain the south wind
> scatters the thick mist,
> no friend to a shepherd, but better than night
> for the robber,
> and a man can see before him only so far as a
> stone cast,
> so beneath their feet the dust drove up in a
> stormcloud
> of men marching, who made their way through
> the plain in great speed.

Lattimore's attempt is brave, but ultimately sinks beneath the welter of imagery: while the essential contrast in the first stanza is between the noise of the Trojan's approach and the silence of the Akhaians', Lattimore gets hopelessly entangled in the richness of the crane imagery and comes to the final two lines awkwardly, somewhat out of breath; finally, he is never quite able to make clear to whom the second stanza, with its long simile, refers, and in his attempt to reproduce literally the syntax of the final two lines, with its perplexing maze of antecedents—"their feet," "stormcloud of men marching," and "made their way"—he only confuses the issue more.

Fitzgerald's looser, though hardly unliteral, version succeeds precisely where Lattimore's fails:

> The Trojan squadrons flanked by officers
> drew up and sortied, in a din of arms
> and shouting voices—wave on wave, like
> cranes
> clamorous lines before the face of heaven,
> beating away from winter's gloom and storms,
> over the streams of Ocean, hoarsely calling,
> to bring a slaughter on the Pygmy warriors—
> cranes at dawn descending, beaked in cruel
> attack.
> The Akhaians for their part came on in silence,
> raging under their breath, shoulder to
> shoulder sworn.
> Imagine mist the south wind rolls on hills,
> a blowing bane for shepherds, but for thieves

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better than nightfalls—mist where a man can see
a stone's throw and no more: so dense the dust
that clouded up from these advancing hosts
as they devoured the plain.

Fitzgerald's version is slightly longer than Lattimore's, just as his lines are shorter, and probably more readable, but one can see here just how deftly Fitzgerald gets to the bottom of the passage in order to extract its sense and shape, and then casts it into an organized, directed whole. And more than Lattimore, too, Fitzgerald is especially keen to the phonetic features of the poetry: through the repetitions of the velar sound of "crane," "clamorous," and so on, the imagery of the Greek is heard shrilly.

And yet, once again, the most convincing detail of Fitzgerald's version of this passage is its most un-Homeric addition: the phrase, "Imagine," which introduces the long simile and replaces the more literal and usual "as if" or "when." Fitzgerald employs this direct invocation of the imagination several times in the course of the translation—once he also uses, a little less successfully, "See in the mind's eye"—and the device, almost an anachronism, offers a good clue to the way in which Fitzgerald reads Homer's epic.

UNLIKE the *Odyssey*, which has always seemed to contain the embryonic shape of a novel or romance, the *Iliad* is nothing but a magnificently long poem about the Trojan War and Achilles' anger, and about the grandeur and horror of the two themes. But how far the reader is able to see these two opposing aspects depends largely on his willingness to concede to Homer his vision of war as something other than evil. For what is absolutely clear about the poem is its belief that *kleos*, heroic glory, can be attained through the exploits of war. At the beginning of the section called the *Patrokleia*, the Glory of Patroklos, Achilles' knight-steward whom he sends into the war as his surrogate, Homer tells us (through Fitzgerald):

Whom first, whom later, did you kill in battle,
Patroklos, when the gods were calling
deathward?
First it was Adrestos, Autonoos,
and Ekheklos; then Perimos Megades,
Eristor, Melanippos; afterward,
Elasos, Moulios, Pylartes. These
he cut down, while the rest looked to
their flight.

Fitzgerald's translation is neater, less chaotic and fierce, than the original, but even so, it underlines the essential truth contained in the passage: those men whom Patroklos kills exist within the imaginative universe of the poem solely in order to *be* killed by the hero in pursuit of his *kleos*.

The condition of *kleos*, crucial to an understanding of Homer, is also the one quality in him most repugnant to modern sensibilities. To talk seriously about heroism in war is difficult enough today. Even Homer's sumptuous descriptions of the brilliant armor worn by the heroes of both armies, bathed in "fire most like midsummer's purest flaming star/in heaven rising," must appear less than entirely convincing to American imaginations impoverished by the videotaped image of dull green fatigues wading through grainy marshland. This is the essential problem facing the contemporary translator of Homer: to make his heroism somehow cogent and believable, yet not to make a Vietnam out of Troy.

Alexander Pope, in the Preface to his *Iliad*, spoke of "the unequalled fire and rapture which is so forcible in Homer" and Fitzgerald has, I think, generally mastered that fire and rapture. If, in the long battle scenes (Books 11-18), he sometimes nods, so does Homer. But while Fitzgerald hardly flinches, as Pope occasionally does, at the graphic detail of Homer's portrayals of death—

Both brows were hit at once, the frontal bone
gave way, and both his eyes burst from
their sockets

—his versions of the great battle scenes do possess a kind of grace and elegance that are not in the original. The heroes in Fitzgerald's reproduction of the Homeric drama often appear to move across the battlefield with a choreographed precision more appropriate to ballet than to war. They are stirred to battle not for the sake of war, not even for the sake of *kleos*, but for something else. Here is the goddess Athena coming to rouse the Akhaians to battle:

So down the ranks that dazzling goddess went
to stir the attack, and each man in his heart
grew strong to fight and never quit the
melee,
for at her passage war itself became
lovelier than return, lovelier than
sailing in the decked ships to their own
native land.

The "dazzling goddess," the "war lovelier than return," and the sheer breathlessness of the final two lines are entirely Fitzgerald's inventions: a vision of an awesome reality transfigured not by the gore and tumult of war, but by death as desire, as eros. Despite its own compelling power, this vision betokens an inability to take Homer's war in its own right, as a foreground of pure, simple heroism. Not surprisingly, Helen herself, in Fitzgerald's vision of the Trojan War, first understands this transfigured reality. Early in the poem, standing high atop the towers of Troy, she points out the Akhaian heroes to the Trojans and tells Priam:

Painful death
would have been sweeter for me, on that day
I joined your son, and left my bridal
chamber,

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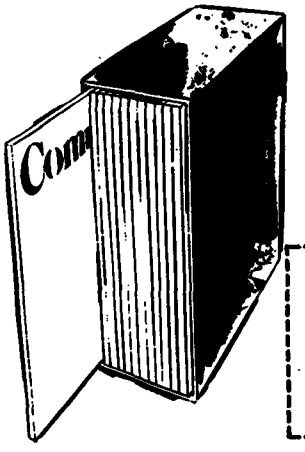
my brothers, my grown child, my childhood
friends!
But no death came, though I have pined
and wept.
Your question, now: yes, I can answer it:
that man is Agememnon, son of Atreus,
lord of the plains of Argos, ever both
a good king and a formidable soldier—
brother to the husband of a wanton . . .
or was that life a dream?

The last line of this passage is a formula, which appears two other times in the poem, and reads literally, in the Greek, "if I ever was." Fitzgerald has done more here than simply make the formula explicit: he has shaped the entire speech so that it culminates in Helen's question, in a doubt which shrouds the entire epic and looks ahead, just barely, to a moment of final apocalypse. The apocalypse itself never actually arrives, not even in the prophecies of Troy's ultimate destruction, since it does not exist in Homer's *Iliad*, but its imminence, a source of this translation's power, is no less an indication of Fitzgerald's inescapable contemporaneity.

THROUGHOUT their lives Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig insisted that they did not intend their translation to become a substitute for the Hebrew Bible. They envisioned its correct role as one of a commentary, and, ultimately, as an incentive that would lead the reader back to the original text, where he would no longer require the mediating presence of the translator in order to confront the "voice." While it remains far more likely that the average reader of the Buber-Rosenzweig or Everett Fox translations will learn Hebrew in order to read the Bible than that the average reader of Fitzgerald's *Iliad* will learn Greek in order to read Homer, Fitzgerald's translation finally accomplishes the same effect: it drives its reader back to the source by intimating, despite its successes, the inability of translation fully to transpose the original. More than the impossibility of translation, however, Fitzgerald's "failure," like Fox's, suggests a deeper predicament: the distance, even the loss, of our past. The virtue which redeems both these translations is their refusal to allow us to ignore the measure of that loss.



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Mahler for Moderns

Eva Hoffman

CHANGES of fashion and public taste are often ephemeral and resistant to analysis, but they are among the more sensitive gauges of our collective internal weather. The "Mahler revival" has been one such occurrence, measurable in record sales, growing numbers of symphony performances, and large amounts of often impassioned discussion. Although the extent and the kind of popularity that Mahler enjoys at the moment may be a transient phenomenon, his music is not, and now that it has been rediscovered, it is rapidly being included in the roster of unassailable classics.

In the meantime, while Mahler is not yet completely relegated to that safe category, his cult seems to cut across all kinds of boundaries, and is not limited to faithful music lovers. People who do not listen to much other classical music do listen to Mahler. Moreover, many Mahler aficionados exhibit cultist behavior; if they run into another initiate, they assume that their common taste creates an immediate bond. Conversely, a person ignorant of or indifferent to Mahler's music is apt to get disqualified as a feeling human being. In other words, Mahler arouses more than ordinary emotions in his listeners, who form intimate relationships with his music and identify themselves by their allegiance to it.

All of this is an intensification of a process that has been unobtrusively going on for at least three decades. There have always been people who knew and savored the special beauty of Mahler's music. There were conductors—Bruno Walter, Stokowski, Leonard Bernstein, Mitropoulos—and organizations, such as the Bruckner-Mahler Society, that tried to disseminate information about Mahler and to make his music available to listeners. It was not until the milestone year of 1960, however, that their efforts met with an upwelling of response which is still riding to its crest. During that year, the hundredth anniversary of Mahler's birth, Leonard Bernstein initiated, arranged, and partly conducted a Mahler festival. All but the most obscure works of Mahler were performed by the New York Philharmonic, with guest appearances by Walter, Mitropoulos, and others. In the same year, a major exhibition called "Mahler and His Times" was held at the old Secession Building in Vienna, where Mahler once conducted a Beethoven concert. Vienna was honoring a man who was an integral part of its history, but the New York festival was spurred by Bernstein's sense that Mahler's music had not yet achieved wide recognition. His remarks introducing the festival still assume an implicitly defensive tone characteristic of the earlier statements about Mahler and quite unnecessary by now.

The efforts of musical taste-makers precipitated and encouraged the Mahler vogue, but they are not a sufficient explanation of it. After all, similar exertions were made on behalf of Bruckner, but he did not catch on to nearly the same degree. The magnitude and the intensity of reactions to Mahler suggest that more is involved than purely musical or aesthetic appreciation. The sources of the response may be both more profound and more superficial than that. In strictly practical terms, Kurt Blaukopf, one of Mahler's recent biographers,* notes that stereophonic recordings do better justice to Mahler than most concert halls. His symphonic music requires contrapuntal clarity combined with thick orchestration, and stereo, for which voices can be recorded separately, can give a more accurate representation of that combination. Indeed, Mahler sometimes tried to create "stereophonic" effects by such devices as placing a small orchestra backstage, or by simulating through dynamics the illusion of varying distances between instruments and listeners.

Among the superficial reasons for popularity, perhaps one should not underestimate the snob appeal of Mahler. If no longer as controversial as he once was, he is still an "interesting" composer, with all that the word implies these days. He is more *outré*, more provocative, than the staple classics. He is associated with a period of intriguing artistic decadence and neurosis. In films Visconti has implied that he is the death-infatuated Aschenbach; now Ken Russell is adding him to his gallery of fascinating weirdos. Mahler is eccentric, difficult to place or explain. Still, one can gather interest points more easily in listening to Mahler than to the later composers whom educated musicians enjoin us to appreciate—Schoenberg,

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* *Gustav Mahler*, translated by Inge Goodwin, Praeger, 279 pp., $10.00.

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Berg, Webern; or Stockhausen, Boulez, or Feldman—even if it is our passing acquaintance with their harsher sounds which makes Mahler comparatively untroubling to hear.

But these are all extrinsic reasons. Finally, musical response in the larger sense depends on the internal worlds which the music creates, and it may be that the new interest in Mahler betokens a greater sympathy for the particular psychic stances which his music embodies. Those stances are primarily the creation of the composer, but they are also determined by the position which the music occupies on the continuum of musical development, on its relationship to the past tradition and its own time. Our interest in Mahler is part of a wider curiosity about art created around the turn of this century—a period whose outlines we are now beginning to trace, and which witnessed the emergence of modernism in its most exciting, seminal stage.

THE recent biographies by Blaukopf and Louis de La Grange* are responsible and judicious; the latter is voluminously detailed. But through all the accumulation of information, Mahler remains an enigmatic and essentially an uninterpreted figure. He was opaque, turned-in and inaccessible as a person; his statements about himself and his opinions about others were frequently inconsistent and do not add up to a clear picture. The element missing—until his last letters to his wife, Alma—is the quality of his personal sympathies, allegiances, feelings—but perhaps those were absorbed into the febrile energy and the music.

Although the biographers are understandably enthusiastic about their subject, even they do not succeed in making him a superficially attractive figure. Restlessness, "nervous will," and the insistence on imposing that will on circumstances are the most prominent characteristics in all of his portraits. Music was the impetus and the goal of his existence, and it took precedence over all else, including people. It seemed impossible for him to make compromises where music was at stake, to restrain his temper or his opinions, or to make concessions to conventional politeness. There is a vignette of a younger musician hopefully playing a new composition for Herr Mahler only to have it greeted by stony silence.

Apart from his art, he was often uncomfortable, ill at ease, unsure how to behave. In her memoirs, Alma assures us that when she went into labor pains and appealed to Mahler for help, his response was to read from Kant's *Prolegomena* out loud for over an hour! She paints him as almost comically self-absorbed and socially awkward. He was barbed with eccentricities, tics, anxieties; was prone to migraine headaches which he relieved by walking at top speed, and had an irregular twitch in his leg which he tried to control unsuccessfully.

And yet, to people who understood him and his music, and with whom he was open and unembarrassed, he was a compelling person, unquestionably marked by greatness. In spite of his anxieties and ailments, he was dynamically energetic. His enthusiasms and loyalties were as strong as his antagonisms. He had an agile, curious, intuitively grasping mind, and away from social chatter could converse tirelessly. He seems to have been unpretentiously indifferent to mundane and monetary concerns, except as they impinged on his career. The tendency of his mind was to move toward religious and philosophical speculations, and he felt a romantic, pantheistic love of nature. But *contemptus mundi* did not bring him a repose of spirit. Bruno Walter talks about him as a person constantly in flux, reaching for new "spiritual gains" but doubting all of his affirmations, destroying whatever foundations he may have built.

The only given, the unshakable foundation in his life, was music and the need to create it. The sources of musical genius are mysterious, but in Mahler's case the springs must have been powerful and tenacious, for there was very little in his background to encourage or nurture his talent. His parents were Bohemian Jews who, from small beginnings, worked up to the position of successful merchants. Mahler's father was eager to understand and adapt to the imperial Austrian culture in which he lived, but he did not reach the degree of assimilation of some of his urban counterparts. His son, Gustav, even after conversion to Christianity and spectacular success, said that he felt "twice exiled": as a Bohemian in the Austrian empire, as a Jew in a Christian country.

The father was resourceful and domineering. The mother was burdened by many childbirths and deaths, limped, and had a perpetually sorrowful face. Mahler was strongly attached to her, and later regretted that his wife's appearance was not more marked by suffering. The tic in his leg might have been another legacy of his sympathy for her. Frequent sibling deaths must have contributed to the morbid imaginative streak discernible in the surviving children. Mahler's sister, Justine, surrounded her bed with lit candles and pretended that she was dead in it. His brother, Otto, unstable and unhappy throughout his short life, committed suicide at the age of twenty-five. Mahler was sometimes visited by nightmarish fantasies while composing: visions of his double approaching him, or of his own body dead in a coffin. As a child he daydreamed and hid in attics for hours on end. During one of those trips in a relative's house, he discovered a piano, and from then on, the instrument became his life. At the age of six, Gustav composed a piece which he called a "Polka Introduced by a Funeral March." It was a prophetic title.

Soon, Mahler became the local prodigy in the

* *Mahler*, Doubleday, 576 pp., $17.50.

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small town of Iglau, and impressed important musicians from other places as well. His father's attitude was what might be predicted from a solid burgher who wanted a similar life for his son. This was success, but not quite the right kind of success. In spite of ample discouragement, Mahler never hesitated about his vocation. He seems to have had complete faith in his instincts and abilities, and a stubborn will to follow their urgings, which is a large part of his genius. In his decision to enter the Vienna Conservatory, he exhibited for the first time that combination of utter conviction in himself and a diplomatic skill in getting his way which was to catapult him over many hurdles later in life. Since he knew that his father would raise strong objections, he enlisted the help of an influential friend in advance. The father was convinced, or perhaps had no choice but to submit.

Mahler's career at the Conservatory, which he entered in 1875, was spotty, at times distinguished, at others marred by his ornery rebelliousness. He probably took a course from the venerable Bruckner, and established a friendship with him which continued for many years. Like many other young musicians, he contracted a worshipful admiration of Wagner. He traveled long distances to Wagner performances, became a vegetarian socialist under his influence, and got thrown out of an apartment for playing the scores of his operas too loudly. His intellectual style, at least, was romantically effusive, and his non-musical writing always retained this conventional mold. It was his music, which, very early (he wrote the unorthodox *Das klagende Lied* at twenty), pushed him out onto more radical promontories, without, it seems, a premeditated program. But the conservative pull is evident in the music as well, especially in the larger structures, which are perhaps more amenable to conscious control than are the processes within them.

"The fiercest blaze of joyous vitality and an all-consuming longing for death both reign alternately in my heart, often changing within the hour—one thing I know, it cannot go on like this!" he wrote during his student days. But go on it did, much better than for some of his fellow musicians whom he knew at the Conservatory. Hugo Wolf, with whom Mahler tried to collaborate on a fairy-tale opera, *Rübezahl*, went insane and committed suicide at an early age. Another intimate, Rott, whom Mahler held in high regard, also ended up in an asylum where he used his compositions for toilet paper to indicate his opinion of human works. Considering the marred lives and tragic endings of so many contemporary artists and thinkers, Mahler's renowned neuroses and eccentricities appear to be temperate responses to the imaginative conditions of that period.

In fact, Mahler seems to have had large reserves of sturdy resilience. He needed them in his tortuous, although always upwardly mobile, conducting career. His first engagements, obtained for him by an impresario, were as an opera conductor in small theaters at Hall and Laibach, and from then on he was cast, not very willingly, in that role. Directing opera is a task studded with difficulties, requiring the combined skills of an administrator, psychologist, dramatic producer, and musician—and the difficulties were compounded for a Jew of Mahler's temperament. He brought his explosive disposition and his uncompromising perfectionism to small provincial theaters as much as to the Royal Budapest Opera. He left singers in tears and orchestras in nasty humors. Everywhere, he provoked resentments, irritations, and downright antagonisms. Anti-Semitism was always an easy trump card in the hands of his detractors. Still, his contributions to every place he passed through were immense and were by and large recognized. Thus, he progressed to more prestigious posts by always seizing the most advantageous moment to get out, and on the strength of blatant merit.

During his lifetime, Mahler's reputation was based mostly on conducting. He often claimed that he hated "theater work," that it was only a distraction from the more important task of composition. But contemporary witnesses—Bruno Walter, for one—testify to his unerring dramatic insight, the vitality and the originality of his conception. His interpretations were never prefabricated. He burrowed his way into the innards of each work, relived it as if for the first time. He had no patience with traditions of performance, but strove for an immediate, primary experience of each piece. Before obtaining the coveted position in Vienna, he conducted in all parts of the Empire—Budapest, Prague, Leipzig, Hamburg. Whenever there was opportunity, he gave exposure to national operas, and the pungent, sensuous sounds of Slavic music especially found their way into his symphonies.

It was not until he reached Vienna, in 1897, first as the substitute and then as the permanent director of the Vienna Opera, that Mahler felt he had come to a spiritual home. The sense was to prove ironic. He brought the Vienna Opera to a new pinnacle of achievement, enlivened its repertory, refurbished the fusty Mozart productions, and gave unsurpassable performances of Wagner. He was the focus of concentrated attention, both favorable and disparaging; but it is doubtful that he ever felt completely at home.

VIENNA at the turn of the century was an imperial capital, a cultural crossroads, and mad about the arts. Austria was politically indolent and on the decline as a power; Stefan Zweig in *The World of Yesterday* speculates that the Viennese substituted artistic for political passion. Actors and writers were celebrated, lionized, imitated. Musical controversies were front-page news and subjects of heated

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coffeehouse discussions. Austria and Germany were seedbeds of modernistic movements; Secession in Vienna foreshadowed *Jugendstil* (Art Nouveau); Expressionism (in whose ranks Mahler should perhaps be included), had its inception here; later there was the Bauhaus. In his intellectual history of the period, *The von Richthofen Sisters,* Martin Green traces the fortunes of the erotic movement which represented a kind of counterculture to the dominant "male" ethic, and which was the germination of modern developments in art throughout Germany and Austria.

Zweig, in his reminiscences of Vienna, notes that Jews, to whom political and administrative spheres were closed, took on the role of patrons and protectors of the arts. "They were the real audience," he writes, "and with their mobile understanding, little hampered by tradition, they were the exponents and champions of all that was new." The roster of Jewish artists who worked in Vienna around the time of Mahler's tenure there is illustrious: Hofmannsthal, Schnitzler, Beer-Hofmann, Peter Altenberg, Sonnenthal, Max Reinhardt. Martin Green also points out the predominance of Jewish figures in the erotic movement, and among Alma's lovers specifically. Although there is no evidence that Mahler was directly acquainted with the erotic movement, his last letters to Alma express some of the ideas espoused by its adherents. He talks of her as his muse, his life force, the eternal feminine from which his music emanates, and of which it is only a pale imitation. And certainly eroticism, in Martin Green's sense of throwing off restraints imposed by prevailing norms and repudiating repressive discipline and orderliness, is one of the poles of Mahler's music—although it is in tension with the urge to bridle, to impose strict form.

The erotic movement was one "counterculture" which generated some of the best art of the time. But in general, the relationship of art to the culture at large was changing, and the Jewish prominence among creative innovators may perhaps be attributed to that shift. Art no longer reflected, or even strove to reflect, the essential spirit of the whole people, as Wagner once wished it to do, but began to take a skeptical, oblique, alienated stance. Jews, who willy-nilly brought to the culture an anomalous and a critical vision, became the ideal creators and exponents of new art.

Still, it was unusual for a Jew to hold a position as an important public servant, such as the directorship of the Vienna Opera. Mahler knew that Jewishness was an obstacle to getting the appointment—so he unhesitatingly took the necessary step of converting. It was a pragmatic gesture, possible to make since on many levels Jewishness did not matter to Mahler. His religious impulse was just that—an impulse, an attraction to the spiritual dimension of experience, which never crystallized into a particular creed or orthodoxy. Nevertheless, there are indications that conversion was not an easy step; he later reported to a friend that it had "cost him a lot."

The *pro forma* gesture was not enough to quell anti-Semitic attacks, especially since Mahler never made any attempts to conceal his Jewishness, nor was he, by nature, a person who could "assimilate"—make compromises, tame his excesses—in any sense. The anti-Semitic press took predictable lines of assault; it charged Mahler's musicianship with "impurity" and declared that he could not understand—really, profoundly understand—the Germanic musical spirit. This of Mahler, about whose interpretation of *Tristan und Isolde* Bruno Walter wrote that he always felt as though he should die in the middle of it.

IT WOULD BE unfair to say that Mahler met with an ungrateful reception. The productions he mounted were brilliant in every respect, and he was rewarded by packed concert-halls, the esteem of connoisseurs, invitations to conduct elsewhere, and many rave reviews. When he conducted his farewell concert, in 1907, people wept and refused to leave the concert hall for hours. But he also provoked violent hostilities, not only of an anti-Semitic nature, which gained momentum during the latter years of his tenure there. Eventually, Viennese critics and music lovers were divided into the pro- and the anti-Mahler factions. His authoritarian and unconciliating method of working irritated the more easygoing, polite Viennese. His ruthlessness and "despotism" became legendary. He tried to develop a sense of uniformly competent ensemble and would not kowtow to the caprices of star singers. In retaliation, some musicians wrote an anonymous indictment. He was criticized as a poor administrator who ruined the working atmosphere; caricatures were drawn of his jerky, volatile, emphatic style of conducting; and when he dared to tamper with orchestration of untouchable classics (he sometimes felt that his changes were more faithful to the composer's intentions), the dismay was unbounded. For the Viennese, this was equivalent to defacing holy statues.

In the midst of all this ferment, Mahler appears as a curiously private, solitary, even an impervious figure. He considered aloofness from the swirls and eddies of public opinion a high virtue, and attained it more fully than most who profess it. He did not engage in public disputes; he had no relish for "society." He did, though, come into contact with notable musicians. He admired Richard Strauss inordinately, and was a mentor to Schoenberg, Zemlinsky, and Bruno Walter. But there is no consistent circle, no broader associations. He was largely immune to the pull of artistic trends and movements. Alfred Roller, whom he handpicked as stage designer for the Vienna Opera (and whose sets were daringly abstractionist), was a member of the Secession, and Mahler knew other

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artists in that group—but his links with it were tenuous.

That so hermetic and reclusive a person should have married Alma Maria Schindler is surprising. The union was incongruous from the start, consigned to failure by almost all who knew them. At forty, he was almost twenty years older. She was beautiful, courted by eminent men, the daughter of wealthy Austrian aristocracy. It seems evident that Mahler's greatest attraction in her eyes, at least initially, was his fame and artistic achievement. She was determined to marry a great man, probably because she knew that this was one of the few avenues available for her to an interesting life and companionship. Her appeal for him is on one level quite obvious. Aside from her reputation as "the most beautiful woman in Vienna," she was said to possess extraordinary radiance and vitality. But apart from these compelling qualities, Mahler must have been intrigued by her otherness, the differences between her and the women he had known previously. Both his mother and his sister —the women he had known longest and best— were timid, self-effacing, restricted by their femininity. Alma was assertive, spirited, unabashed by men, and comparatively independent. She had read and thought, had musical ambitions, and discussed problems of composition with Mahler without being intimidated.

Mahler's courtship of her was, not unlike his treatment of orchestras, authoritative, impetuous, and although occasionally awkward, marked by a high sense of his own value. After a few meetings he alluded to marriage as if it were a settled question. Although her spunky independence must have been a drawing card at first, Mahler had small tolerance for any opposition or insubordination to his will, and he soon set out to divest her of all autonomy with a frightening singlemindedness. When composing music prevented her from writing to him one day, he sent her an almost brutal letter demanding that she give up her musical efforts and subjugate herself completely to his work. From then on, he explained, he should be the center and the periphery of her life. She recoiled at first, but then convinced herself that such a renunciation might be splendid, and did not touch composition for the next nine years.

He conducted the marriage with unrelenting paternalism, directing her reading, scolding and praising her like a pupil. And yet, in spite of this veneer of complete assurance, there are glimpses of ways in which he felt at a disadvantage with her, shaky and uncertain. He was uncomfortable with her more worldly friends, she felt contemptuous of his. He worried about his sexual performance and was sometimes incredulous that such a young and beautiful creature could love him. Some of their friends, at least, felt that the relation was a privileged one for him. In a passage quoted in Alma's memoirs, Frau Dehmel confides to her diary that ". . . he is the first Jew, except my father, to impress me as a man—one who doesn't, to put it crudely, strike me as impotent. I am glad that such a beautiful, proud, strong German girl has married him." When, toward the end of his life, Alma threatened separation (nine years of repressive submission, even if it was to a genius, took a severe toll of her), all of his confidence shattered, and he was left in frenzied desperation. For the first time, his letters become fervently amorous and vulnerable. Fearful that his life and his selfhood were collapsing, he went so far as to consult Freud, whom he met for a single, long session shortly before his death. One can sense, in the veiled story of Mahler's marriage, the same willful control of unruly, irrational, potentially destructive forces that can be discerned in his music. Those forces, however, like the imp of the perverse, always irrepressibly rise to the surface and make themselves heard.

THE resistance to Mahler within the Vienna Opera and the pressures outside it made working conditions exceedingly difficult for him, and when a financially tempting offer came from Heinrich Conried, the manager of the Metropolitan Opera in New York, he accepted. Initially, he treated the American journey as a moneymaking venture, which would enable him to devote himself exclusively to composing afterward. But he found that he liked America— its effervescence, its monumentality ("Fortissimo at last!" he exclaimed on seeing Niagara Falls), and its less superstitious attitudes toward tradition. He was provided with top-notch musicians, whom he found more malleable than their European counterparts. Audiences were in transports over him. Moreover, through the efforts of a women's committee, he was given the headship of the failing New York Philharmonic. He extricated himself from his Met contract, and gave most of his energies to the orchestra. He was free of the theater at last.

His dream of spending all of his time on composing was never realized; death, of angina, combined with a chronic heart defect, intervened in 1911 when Mahler was fifty years old. As it was, throughout his life, the strenuous demands of his conducting schedule forced him to restrict composing to the summers. For that season, he secluded himself in rural settings, and while Alma guarded his privacy and his routine he went off to a separate studio and plunged into creative whirlpools. Each work claimed him wholly, and threw him into states of intense agitation or utter ecstasy. He spoke of composition as a release of torrents of energy accumulated and pent up during the year, and perhaps that is part of the reason for their unleashed, driven character.

In the winter he was a mouthpiece for the

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music of others, in the summer a conduit for his own inspiration. The others are present in his music, but finally he does not succumb to anyone's spell, not even to Wagner's "siren song," as Bruno Walter calls it. His almost literal usage of characteristic fragments does not constitute influence. The styles of other composers are not assimilated and then transmuted into a style which derives from or is a continuation of theirs. Rather, the juxtaposition of various styles betokens a distance from each of them. Mahler is not so much an heir to classical and romantic music as its commentator, a metaphysician who sees all, even the most distressing implications of that tradition.

The stimuli of his composition were literary and philosophical as much as musical. He read widely and intensively, everything from folk tales and poems to obscure mystical treatises. His song cycle, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, uses lieder from a collection of folk ballads for which he felt a great affinity. Simple, naively religious lyrics also appear in vocal parts of his symphonies. He was steeped in German romantic and post-romantic literature, and had a particular taste for its more fantastic and bizarre examples. He thought that E. T. A. Hoffmann's stories contained the very essence of music and liked Jean Paul for his fluctuations between the sublime and the grotesque. The *Titan* (First) Symphony, composed in 1888, was named after Jean Paul's novel of the same title. He thought of the shape of his symphonies in philosophical terms, although he sometimes suppressed movement titles, fearing that they would encourage audiences to hear his music as programmatic rather than pure. But in fact the programs differ from Debussy's pictorial descriptions, for example, in being themselves abstract. Usually, they outline a movement from the soul's travails in worldly sorrow, to redemption and the unfettering of the spirit from earthly bonds. On occasion, Christian terminology is used, but in general, Mahler's mysticism is vague, as are the poems he uses. The music overshadows these lyrics and concepts—and is also much more complex. The urge to purity, to transcendence, is rarely so easily resolved as the words suggest.

Mahler's religious lyrics did not help to convince his first audiences of the music's legitimacy or propriety. Again, it would be inaccurate to say that he was completely misunderstood or unappreciated. Musicians admired his symphonies, and traveled from distances to hear them performed, as Mahler had traveled to hear Wagner in his youth. (This did not include all musicians—Debussy and Paul Dukas walked out of one of his concerts in protest.) There was also a small, international coterie of devoted adherents, and as his music became more familiar, the enthusiasm grew more widespread. But the enthusiasm was often outweighed by the bafflement and even wrath, and applause was mingled with catcalls and derision.

Critical misunderstanding was especially rife; one revealing contemporary account is a peculiar essay by a critic who analyzes Mahler's music astutely, but who is nevertheless shocked and insulted by it. The essay, by William Ritter, is reproduced in parts by de La Grange, and it is worth quoting here at some length, because it captures so vividly the often hysterical consternation felt by Mahler's first listeners, and the admixture of anti-Semitism almost inevitably linked with protests against him. After a description of Mahler's Fourth, Ritter goes on to say:

> What does it actually amount to? And where are we in relation to the noble world of great music ranging from Bach's Passions to the austere, Promethean, and magnificent Symphonies of such as Beethoven, Brahms, and Bruckner? It's as though we'd gone from Bayreuth to a sort of Überbrettl.

He recognizes "the musical giant behind the grimaces and the thoroughbred beneath the grotesque trappings," but he deplores

> the constant overloading and the perversion of an alluring melody with every possible large or small sound effect, the way it swung from the sublime to the ridiculous, in an apparent effort to please everyone from the aristocrat down to the peasant; the way in which its Jewish and Nietzschean spirit defied our Christian spirit with its sacrilegious buffoonery and the fact that it exasperated our loyalty to the past by crushing all our artistic principles to a pulp.

For Ritter, and many others, Mahler committed sacrilege by sounding the death-knell for everything that went before him. But Ritter is mistaken in attributing intentionality to the offense. Mahler never set out to be outlandish or shocking. There is no evidence that he was guided by aesthetic creeds or avant-garde theories. The language in which he talks about his music is much more conventional than the music itself. Mahler thought of himself as a receptacle for the music, and said that he did not compose but was composed. Of course that is only one half of the truth; there is also ordering, filling in voices, finishing contrapuntal lines, choosing the most effective orchestration. But Mahler knew how to follow the logic of his impulses, and that logic, for personal and historical reasons, took him one step beyond Wagner and Bruckner, to a limbo between two worlds.

This netherworld does not obey the rules of any region, and Mahler's music often violates classical canons of taste. Largely for that reason, he remained in critical disfavor for a long time, continuing to be charged with the same offenses of which Ritter found him guilty. And indeed, Mahler's music often narrowly avoids sheer bombast and self-indulgence. It may be these very excesses which, ironically, are responsible for Mahler's current popularity, for they make his music deceptively accessible.

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Even more than with most composers, one can listen to different Mahlers, and one of these Mahlers is a dramatic artist who is prone to broad, extravagant gestures. He is impulsive, freely expressive, impetuous. His themes are often simple, immediately graspable, and are driven hard to expand and to make their point. His "mass effects" created by voluminous instrumentation are voluptuous, lavishly erotic. Thought and emotion are translated into palpable physical sensation. Mahler often aimed at creating overwhelming effects on the listener. The monumentality and the drama of the first movement of the Second Symphony or the last of the Eighth engulf the listener, draw him in irresistibly. It is this side of Mahler which earned him, in the past, the pejorative epithet of "gigantism." But now, once again, we seem to be attracted to amplitude and opulence in art; witness the resurgence of oversized canvases, of sculptures one can walk through, of movies replete with Baroque excesses. Perhaps this is a swing of the pendulum away from the parsimonies of self-reflective art, perhaps a necessary competitiveness with physical bigness around us, and with the frightening quantities of other art. It takes more to make an impact. Among classical composers, Mahler, with his casts of hundreds, outdoes them all, even the electronically magnified sound of rock groups.

It is entirely probable that many people hear only this super-romantic, sincere, vastly panoramic Mahler and ignore his more troublesome manifestations. It may be this Mahler who, as Deryk Cooke quipped some time ago, is becoming the Tchaikovsky of our day. Richard Strauss, a contemporary of Mahler, is another case in point. Suddenly, his music is deemed easy enough to be fare for a movie score (the record jackets remind us that *Thus Spake Zarathustra* was the score of *2001*, for all the world as if it were *Love Story*). But one sometimes wonders what is left in this transformation from high to popular art aside from the opening theme.

Of course, the easiness of Mahler is only superficial. The "gigantism" is embedded and must be understood in the context of an emotional world which is multiform, full of incongruities, and often highly disturbing. Thus, on a more serious level, the fact that Mahler supplants Tchaikovsky as our Tchaikovsky indicates a shift in our affinities, in what we can spontaneously rather than obligatorily enjoy. Tchaikovsky's forthright, lyrical, "mainstream" romanticism strikes us as suspiciously sentimental. Mahler's quirks and complexities guarantee his legitimacy. He appeals to our taste for ambiguity, paradox, extreme irony. It is his "doubleness," as Bernstein calls it, which distinguishes Mahler sharply from Bruckner, and probably accounts for his greater interest to us. Bruckner's music is monolithic, unrelievedly calm, ponderous. There is nothing uniform about Mahler's music; it is mercurial, unpredictable.

In every way, Mahler practices the art of brinksmanship. His music exists at that difficult point between aesthetic systems, where one set of attitudes and norms is no longer absolute, and another set has not yet come to replace it. If Wagner and Bruckner stand at the point of the most extreme development of romanticism, then Mahler stands just beyond that point, where the unity of the romantic aesthetic begins to unravel. It is difficult to imagine music more refulgent, luxuriant, containing more force of passion than Wagner's. His "infinite melody" carries melodiousness to ultimate lengths, his harmonies are full to the bursting point, his rhythmical movements are grandly protracted. In Mahler's symphonies, the immensity reaches unbearable proportions, and then shatters into fragments. "It is terrible," Mahler wrote about the first movement of his Third Symphony,

> the way it keeps growing and expanding so far that my Second seems to me a baby by comparison. It is so much bigger than life-size that by comparison with it everything human seems to shrink to pygmy size. I am seized with horror when I realize where all this is leading, when I see the path marked out for the art of music and when I realize that the fearful responsibility of accomplishing this gigantic mission falls to me.

Mahler's horror might have been mitigated if he could have foreseen that he was the end of the path, that after him would come the economy of Schoenberg and the minimalism of Webern. But, concomitant with the vertiginously expansive urge, the collapse of the grand classical symphony is already imminent in his music, even in the same piece which he is describing. This movement is at times so overblown as to be self-mocking. Romantic gestures are served up on a platter. But the masses of sound, at the peak of their intensity, fracture and leave attenuated, thin, high single lines. And throughout the movement, an inappropriate, biting, sour trumpet flourish accompanies and undercuts the lyricism and the martial *Sturm und Drang*.

At times, to risk a far-fetched comparison, Mahler's music sounds like a representation of Roderick Usher's hypertrophied mind. Usher, the dark underside of the romantic artist, has pushed himself beyond human, physical limits, into a disembodied, insane transcendence. Mahler's music, too, travels into stratospheres ominously severed from any "natural" grounding. His fragments of heightened, chromatic, convoluted, anguished melodies often seem to appear from and vanish into vacuums, without being embedded in any matrix, or supported by a base.

But no matter how far the music departs from traditional form, it always eventually returns to its confines—to solid tonality, to classical sonata

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pattern, to clear periodic structure. Mahler has been compared to Kafka, another Bohemian Jew, both in his psychological significance and his formal procedures, but perhaps the parallel to Edgar Allen Poe is in general just as revealing. Both artists use preexisting forms and conventions, often in an absurdly exaggerated, mannered way, and both wreak havoc within those forms, sabotage them, and disintegrate their usual meanings. For a long time, what was visible to us was the absurdity, the *kitsch*—while now we are apt to discern the darker meanings contained by the mannerisms.

It is the presence of traditional, tonal norms which causes us to experience departures from them as distortions. The disjunctions between them make for tremendous tension, turbulence, and incongruity in much of Mahler's music. The listener is rarely allowed to rest on an even plateau, to retain equilibrium. Extremes of mood alternate and converge on each other. Progressions of triadic harmonies culminate in clashing discords. Sonorous textures are abruptly supplanted by small, brittle ones. Instruments are made to play outside their usual pitch and dynamic range. Flutes exert themselves to fortissimo and trumpets are restrained to ethereal softness. French horns, usually employed episodically, carry prolonged melodic lines. Rhythmical patterns, which to a large extent determine our subjective experience of music, veer off from the romantic movement of preparation, swelling, climax, and release. Climaxes are unfinished, rhythmical movements intercepted in midstream, contrasting rhythmical lines travel their parallel courses. All these sometimes violent oppositions can be ironic, grotesque, even demonic. The most frequently cited example of Mahler's "diabolism" is the "Funeral March in Callot's Manner" in the First Symphony, in which somber gravity is intextricably linked with derisive, coarse humor. It is rare, in fact, for Mahler to sustain unqualified moods of heroism, tenderness, or tragedy, without the intrusion of invidious humor or problematical, contorted music.

The contrasting elements are often taken verbatim, so to speak, from other sources, or are strongly reminiscent of them. There are segments of his symphonies which sound like a patchwork compendium of Western music. Bach fugues stand side by side with military marches, snippets of Slavic folk songs and Austrian waltzes seesaw with Beethoven-like motifs and imitations of natural sounds. Standing at the end of a tradition, Mahler seems to look back on it, already with nostalgia, irreverence, and affectionate irony. No sentiment, no cultural edifice is absolute or invulnerable in Mahler's musical world. It is all curiously similar to Charles Ives's use of musical *objets trouvés*. Ives expresses an American stance toward the classical tradition—sometimes fond, sometimes celebratory, but always distanced. Mahler, in different circumstances and for different reasons, shares this vantage point. The compression of so many diverse and discrepant energies into single works threatens to explode into an unruly hurly-burly at times—but Mahler, as if by an exertion of sheer will, always manages to hold it all together.

This topography of Mahler's territory is, of course, not equally true for all its parts. In his later vocal works particularly—*Kindertotenlieder, Das Lied von Der Erde*—a more uniform voice is evident. The writing here tends toward the "modern" and the dark end of the Mahler spectrum. Technically, it is more economically orchestrated, and has the transparency of linear counterpoint which presages Schoenberg. Incidentally, although Schoenberg always admired Mahler, he felt that it was not until the Seventh Symphony that Mahler achieved the balance and the objectivity necessary for great art. But even in the earlier works there are whole movements of light gaiety or pastoral serenity.

Still, the predominant Mahler *gestalt* is disturbed agitation. His description of the Fifth Symphony, couched in characteristically romantic language of natural metaphor, could be equally well applied to most of his works. "Oh, heavens," he wonders in a letter to his wife,

> what are they to make of this chaos of which new worlds are for ever being engendered, only to tumble in ruin the moment after? What are they to say to this primeval music, this foaming, roaring, raging sea of sound, to these dancing stars, to these breathtaking, iridescent, and flashing breakers?

He predicted that the public, like a flock of sheep, would say "Baa!" But for today's listeners, the anxious disorder, the complexities of conception and feeling, emerging from and assuaged by familiar structures, hold a peculiar fascination. His music defines the painful point of breakage. It foreshadows our own instabilities and fragmentations—but from an intense, grand, and still unified vantage point. In Mahler we have an artist in whom we can recognize ourselves from a nostalgic distance.

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Ivanov's "The Adventures of a Fakir"

A Story

Daniel Fuchs

ONE of the nicer things that happened to me when we moved was meeting Mr. Michael Pim, the extremely competent but reticent reference librarian at the Fairfax library on Gardner Street here in Los Angeles.

"Pim, Pim," I said to him one day, to acknowledge his unvarying cheerfulness and quiet good manners. " 'You must never, never forget poor Pim.' "

"Pain," he said.

"No, Pim. *The Adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym.* Poe," I said.

"*The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym,*" he again gently corrected me. "My name isn't Pim. It's Payne. Call me Mike."

He then went on to mention—no doubt to get me over my moment of embarrassment—that the line I had quoted from Poe formed part of the epigraph to a book by the Soviet author Vsevolod Ivanov, *The Adventures of a Fakir.* I had never heard of Ivanov or his book. The English translation, Payne said, came out in 1935, the book was long ago out of print, and a copy could not be obtained even at the main Los Angeles library at Fifth and Flower.

The City of Long Beach in California has a curious used-book store, surely the only one of its kind in the world. It's not a store; it's a warehouse, a pair of warehouses. The stacks tower fifteen and twenty feet to the ceiling, and the stacks run on, fill the building and then the building next to it—a jungle, a forest of books. (It is called "Acres of Books.") The volumes go back twenty, thirty, forty years, and they seem to me, when I am there, to be of a kind: Ernest Poole, Floyd Dell, Katharine Brush, Ludwig Lewisohn (*Upstream, Midchannel*), Harry Kemp (*Tramping on Life, More Miles*), *The Story of Mankind, The History of Philosophy,* Maxwell Bodenheim, *The Red Lily, Crome Yellow,* Norman Douglas, Firbank, Barbellion, Barbusse, Huysmans, Wasserman's *World's Illusion,* Voynich's *The Gadfly* —relics of other lifetimes, households, apartments, enthusiasms. In this great accumulation of forty-year-old used books, it was no surprising thing to find Ivanov's *Adventures* listed, and on the flyleaf of the copy I bought, handwritten on the page, was the name of the original owner, "Commander Edward Pritchett Charles, USNR, Hemet, Calif."

We have friends, the Shuirmans, who live in Hemet and whom we regularly visit. Through the Shuirmans, I got to meet Mr. Charles and was able to spend some time with him. He is a gentleman now in his eighties and is an almond grower. I had never seen almond trees. They are graceful, slender trees, not very tall; they are grouped together in stands or close rows, and, to me, seem shy, retiring—I think they are the loveliest trees I know.

Mr. Charles was born in England. He had been smitten from his earliest years with the romantic notion of the West, had devoured all the novels —Zane Grey, Eugene Manlove Rhodes, Harold Bell Wright, William MacLeod Raines—and as soon as he could, while still in his teens, had come over to America and the deserts. Here he had married a Jewish lady or girl who, remarkably, had been similarly infatuated with the West. She had emigrated from the Bronx. Her sister, who had remained in the Bronx and at that time was still living there, had a son who was a fiction writer. He was the one, Mr. Charles told me, who put the Russian book together, who had edited it or had had something to do with it, and when the book came out, the sister naturally sent them a copy. Mr. Charles said he had met this young writer once or twice; the writer moved to California in the middle 40's, soon after the war, and had lived—when Mr. Charles and his wife visited him—on a Sierra Bonita Street or Avenue in Los Angeles. This startled me, because Sierra Bonita Avenue is just one block away from where I now live, not far from the library on Gardner Street. "Yes?" Mr. Charles said, when I remarked on this to him. "I still remember his name—Nathan Goldkette." Mr. and Mrs. Charles were divorced now for a good many years.

Back in Los Angeles, at the library, I told Mike Payne about Goldkette, that he had worked on the book we had talked about, and had once lived right here on Sierra Bonita Avenue.

"Yes, I know. He still does," Mike said.

"Do you know him?"

"Yes."

I thought it would be interesting to meet him, but Payne from the first tried to dissuade me.

Daniel Fuchs, the noted novelist and screenwriter, is the author of *Summer in Williamsburg, Homage to Blenholt,* and *Low Company.* His most recent novel is *West of the Rockies.*

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The Adventures of a Fakir is an unusual work. It is a blend of *Boris Godunov* and Twain. Two boys—the narrator Vsevolod and his friend Petka Zabarov—undertake to wander across Russia into Asia, so that they can see and study the magic of India. They set forth on the giant stage of Russia, with its brutal distances, and along with these enormous dimensions, there is at the same time the innocence and freshness of youth of *Huckleberry Finn*. The book is organized in two parts, the first headed "Get Rid of That, Vsevolod, Get It Out of Your System!" Part Two is titled "So That's the Sort of Fakir You Are, Vsevolod. This Is What You've Come To." It is bubbling stuff, organic and authentic, not devised, and I believed that anyone who had the spirit to work on such shimmery material was certainly well worth knowing. "It wouldn't be like that," Mike murmured, disapproving. He acted as though I would not be welcomed or that I might be disappointed or rebuffed or that I needed to be protected, but in the end, since I stood fast, he gave me the street number of Goldkette's address. "We're not supposed to do this," he said.

Do you remember the scene in *Sunset Boulevard* where William Holden, hunted and scrambling, blunders into Gloria Swanson's mansion and, to his astonishment, is readily accepted and admitted because von Stroheim thinks he's the veterinarian? When I rang the bell at Goldkette's house, the door opened promptly and a woman, well along in years, said, "Come in, come in. I waited all morning."

She thought I was the TV repair man. It turned out Goldkette wasn't home. She was his landlady. He boarded with her—that was why I couldn't find his phone number, the phone was in her name. I explained what I was doing there—that I was an admirer, a neighbor, and had dropped in to see him.

"What do you want from him?"

I said I wanted nothing. I lived in the neighborhood. I liked the work he had done on a book I had come across, and just wanted to meet him.

"Without a reason? You just want to see Goldkette for nothing? Just to meet him?"

Put like that, her objections had a certain force. I took out an envelope that had my name and address on it, removed the letter, added my phone number on the envelope, and asked the landlady to ask Mr. Goldkette to call me, if he would. I have a feeling she never gave him the envelope. She was taken up with the TV repair man; they wouldn't tell you what time they would come, she grumbled, and you had to stay in the house all day and wait. In any case, Goldkette never called and I didn't see him.

THERE is a chapter in *The Adventures of a Fakir* (following one titled "The Enchanted Library") which is headed "The Apathetic Town," about a town "on the dull, yellow, indifferent steppe, where there were no cabs at the station, in fact there was nothing at all, and the people were indifferent to everything." If Petropavlovsk was apathetic, I would say the hallmark of this new Fairfax Avenue neighborhood I have moved into is rage. Mainly old people live here. There are many retirement homes in the area and you see the fierce resentment of the elderly. They have little to lose, are rebellious to the point of recklessness, are harassed daily from many directions, have been much put upon in their time, and are badly distracted. "Lady, you are walking in front of me!" I once heard a woman saying to another on the sidewalk, pushing past her.

A man came up to me on the street—a man I don't know, a total stranger. "I have to order a taxi," he said to me, out of nowhere. "I go to my car, I can't drive the car. My hand shakes. I have dizzy spells. I lost twenty pounds. The doctors don't know what it is. They make tests!" He didn't look me in the face as he talked, he talked to me standing sideways, abruptly pulled himself together and departed. I was walking past 442½ N. Fairfax Ave., the address of the hasidic Chabad-Lubavitch group here, when Rabbi N. Estulin came out of the store and seized me, wanting me to be blessed. I demurred, resisting. He glared at me contemptuously. Estulin weighs 110 pounds, no more, but he had me inside the store in seconds. He had the phylacteries on me, a prayer shawl around my shoulders, the skullcap covering on my head, and we prayed together, I obediently repeating the Hebrew after him; we prayed for a solid ten minutes in a fearful, pounding joy.

The sidewalks are thronged with people; they mill in front of Canter's restaurant, in front of the bank. There are marital quarrels in the open, melodramas played out in the extravagant European style: I once watched a three-cornered upheaval, two men running after a woman, beseeching with all their hearts, the woman refusing to listen, beating them off. She was wildly distraught, plump and beautiful, with shiny black hair which she had apparently just washed, and I can still see the face of the stalwart young police officer (from Cucamonga? Costa Mesa?) standing by at his patrol car, taking in the scene with a look of wonder and longing. The tumult simmers; the ambulances go racing by, their sirens shrieking, on their everlasting way to Midway and Mt. Sinai, the two hospitals near us; and in the distance, beyond the Loehmann dress shop's big revolving sign, when the air is clean, loom the San Gabriels, mighty and neglected. Taking my walk one day, I came upon an accident—an ambulance knocked over on its side in a collision with a car which had rammed it at an intersection. Four painters were drawn out of the overturned ambulance; they were placed on a lawn and lay still in a row in their frosted white paint-

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er's overalls. In the havoc, a car came speeding up. The driver, a woman, jammed on her brakes, flung out of the car, stood in the middle of the street, raised her hands in the air, and screamed with all her might. She had nothing to do with the ambulance or any of the painters. It was sheer emotion.

Britts department store—a little to the east of Fairfax Avenue, below the Farmers Market—has a large cafeteria on its main floor, Holland House, separate from the department store and yet part of it. The oldsters congregate here in the afternoons, sitting five and six to a table in sociable groups. On my way home from my walks I often cut through the department store and the cafeteria, for the sake of the air conditioning, to share in the feeling of comradeship. I was passing through on one of these afternoons when suddenly, in the hum of the air conditioning and the hubbub of voices, I clearly heard the fragment arising: "Goldkette? Goldkette? He is in the w.c. . . ."

I turned around. I saw only people sitting at tables, talking. I thought it was hallucination, a trick of memory, and moved on. (" 'Pym!' came a whisper. 'You must never, never forget poor Pym!' This time I heard the words pronounced quite distinctly by someone close at hand"—is the way the full epigraph from Poe goes.) But not long after this occurrence, I was caught up in a minor emergency. I remembered the reference to the water closet in my vagary and, thinking not to wait until I got home, decided to use the men's room at Britts. The room here is not pretentious —in the basement, at the bottom of a long flight of stairs, out of the way, secluded and commodious. I was standing facing the wall. I heard a clatter behind me—a stall door opening and then banging shut, the shuffling of footsteps, the sound of footsteps going up the stairs and then halting. A man's voice called out: "Goldkette, are you coming. . . ?" I whirled about. This was not illusion. "Mr. Goldkette?" I said. "Nathan Goldkette. . . ?"

A man—small-sized, wiry, five feet five, six—glowered at me, his face savage and contorted. He was standing in a prizefighter's stance, his legs wide apart, one leg bent oddly at the knee, his elbows out, his arms flailing and heaving. I saw that he was adjusting his clothes, standing in this strained, peculiar position, as men do, to keep his trousers from falling while he struggled with his shirt-tails, flattening them out and arranging them smoothly in place.

I presented myself. I told him I had been seeking him, that I was a great reader of Ivanov's *Adventures*, knew his connection with the work, and had been eager to meet him.

"Why? What have you got in mind?"

"Nothing in particular," I assured him. I tried to make the matter as casual as I could. I pointed out that we were neighbors. I said perhaps I could take him to lunch at his favorite cafeteria—here, Canter's, the County Museum on Wilshire Boulevard—and we could talk.

He agreed. "We could get together, if you want." Goldkette's friend, the man who had called out to him, had gone ahead, so we were alone for a while. Goldkette softened. He tried to make amends for his hostility, for having glowered. He was in a bad mood, he explained. He had a prostate problem that kept him going to the men's room and gave him trouble. "People misunderstand. You pass somebody on the street and you think he has something against you. That's not true. He's in pain. It has no relationship to you whatsoever, but of course you don't know that. I suppose I'll have to go through with it sooner or later." He meant the surgery. "It's not a preventive procedure. They don't do it for preventive reasons, so you live with it as long as possible. According to my doctor, I'm not so bad off compared to others. They got real problems, getting up three, four times a night. My doctor didn't want to talk about it and put ideas into my head, he said. He told me, when I go to the movies, not to be foolish, to get up and go to the bathroom in the middle of the picture. 'Don't mind missing a few scenes,' he told me. 'It won't hurt your enjoyment of the picture. . . .' If you want to have lunch and talk, fine. That's all right with me. We'll work something out."

GOLDKETTE, who had published some books of his own, was called in one day by his publisher and given a manuscript to read. He came back the next morning, beaming with praise. The publisher said if Goldkette was sincere and honestly felt the manuscript had merit, why didn't he do some work on it and get it in shape; the publisher would then publish it. "I got sucked into it. I was a kid, twenty-four," Goldkette said to me on the terrace of the County Museum cafeteria, the part of the terrace deep down the eastern side that the public doesn't seem to know about and which is generally deserted. "I was told the book was translated by a government bureau over there, not by a single person, and maybe that accounted for the confusion. To tell the truth, I always seriously believed someone somewhere dropped the bundle of papers and then just slapped the pages together again. What you read wasn't what Ivanov wrote.

"I couldn't follow the page numbers. There were page numbers missing and duplicated. The whole thing was typed out on cheesy, translucent paper in purplish ink—the kind of writing they used to have on those menu cards in cheap restaurants. I made big cuts, not because the parts I cut out were bad or uninteresting, but because I didn't understand them and they didn't fit. I used the scissors as much as I could and tried to paste the pieces together, but most of the time it was too much trouble and I just typed the whole

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page from start to finish. I juggled the different sections around, worked up some kind of an order, and put on those chapter headings to help the reader follow the development. I changed lines and wrote in transitions to bridge the gaps. When the manuscript went to the printer, the publisher asked me to check the galleys, so I was able to make the last-minute corrections and revisions. For proofing the galleys, the typing job, the editing, he paid me thirty dollars. The joke of it was when the book came out, he came belly-aching to me because it didn't sell."

The title page of *The Adventures of a Fakir* shows no translator or editor. If the USSR government agency did the translation, as Goldkette had been given to believe, no acknowledgment of the fact appears in the book. As for Goldkette himself, the longer he talked, the clearer it became how it was that he wasn't credited. "He always used to tell me not to give up my job, that in his opinion every writer ought to have a dependable source of income. He was rough on writers. He once gave a writer a secondhand overcoat. He took me to lunch twice, I think, one time in a speakeasy, and one night he had me up to his house for dinner. They had a big place in Scarsdale. After dinner, a bunch of after-dinner guests trooped in, some of the men wearing patent leather opera pumps, which impressed me. I had a big success that night.

"What happened was some people came over to sit with me so that I wouldn't feel left out—a man and his wife and one other person. I started to tell some stories. They began to laugh. Other people, hearing the laughing, wanted to know what was going on and they came over. This kept up. I'm not exaggerating. Pretty soon I had them all, the whole party, everyone, sitting in front of me, listening. When it was over, a man came up to me and said, 'Son, you'll make it big on Broadway, don't worry. You got a real acting gift.' He thought I was an actor, not a writer. It's a funny thing, the effect a good big success has on you. This thing happened more than forty years ago and not a year passes that I don't think back to it and daydream over the occasion."

After four books, Goldkette decided to change publishers and see if he would do better somewhere else. Goldkette's contract gave the publisher options on his next two books, the new books to be published under the same terms as the old contract. This had the result of giving the publisher options on two books in perpetuity, since the new contract always had the same options clause. This didn't seem possible to Goldkette, and the publisher himself said the contract was only a formality and didn't mean anything, that any time Goldkette wanted a release, he would have it—the publisher wasn't keeping anyone against his will. But when Goldkette asked for the release, the man said no. Goldkette then asked for an advance. The publisher said he would have to consider it, to see if an advance was feasible and how high they could go, and would send him a letter. But that was only a ruse to get him out of the office. The letter, when it came, said that they had never given Goldkette an advance in the past and wouldn't start now. Goldkette took his contract to the Authors' Guild of America. The people at the Guild said that in their intensive, long-range study of authors' contracts over the years they had found thirty-two different possible abuses and that Goldkette's was the only contract they had ever seen which had all thirty-two. "They said the options clause was unconstitutional and probably could be knocked out, since it was against the amendment prohibiting slavery. But I was still stuck for the two books. The present contract, which I had already signed, was still legally binding and I had to live it out. It made no sense to me but that's what their lawyer told me."

Goldkette stopped writing books. After the war, he left New York for good, moved to California, and went into keps. "Keps! Keps!" he said, pointing a finger to his head, seeing that I was in the dark. "I made keps downtown on Soto Street." He was a capmaker. It was the family trade, he had had relatives in this business, and had gone back to it. "At Evander Childs High School in the Bronx, if we had ideas about being a writer, we tried to get the assignment as the school correspondent to the different newspapers. We wrote up the games, sent in scores. I think four of us later, after graduation, latched on and got regular or part-time jobs. I was one of them. I worked for a while on the Bronx *Home News*. But the most famous one was John Storey, who was older than the rest of us and the first to break through. His real name was Jonas Cohen. He made it at the New York *World-Telegram*. He had his own by-line. You always saw his name in the paper. He was the Scholastic Sports Editor. Then suddenly it all stopped. He dropped out and nobody knew what became of him until one day a friend of mine walked into Storey's father's grocery store on Mosholu Parkway and saw Storey working there, for his father. He had an apron wrapped around him, was busy with the customers, and was perfectly happy. We all talked about it and couldn't figure it out, and then just a few years later I went ahead and did the identical thing." I didn't have the slightest idea why Goldkette had wanted to pronounce caps as keps. I didn't think at the time to ask him.

But that was after the war. During the war, he was drafted into the army and served as an aerial gunner in the air force. "Because I was short. Because I was short," he said, wincing as he spoke. "I didn't go asking for the duty. They pushed me into it. They had a problem in those days. They were looking for small-sized guys."

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On the islands, his officers were always after him because they claimed he broke off firing too soon. They wanted him to let fly with everything when he was in action—the ammunition he saved wasn't going to do him any good if he got shot down with it, they argued—but Goldkette couldn't help himself, he saw no sense in firing away when he knew the target was out of range. The waste went against the grain. "In those days we made a notch, a mark, on the butt of the machine gun every time we got a kill. I had eight marks on mine. When they came bellyaching to me about the shooting, I'd tell them, 'What are you complaining about, I'm getting the planes down and I bring you back bullets besides?' "

He used to say the Hebrew morning prayer every morning, the one with the phylacteries, which goes on and on. "I said it then and I still do. It's the way you're brought up." While he was praying, an alert would come in, sending the attack bombers up to make a strike or fend off an incoming enemy group, but Goldkette wouldn't budge. "They used to holler and yell at me, 'Goldkette, come on! Goldkette, come on! You'll be late!' but I shoved them off with my elbows, getting them away from me, and wouldn't listen to them—you're not supposed to talk to anybody or interrupt while you're *davvening* and they're not supposed to talk to you. They brought me up before the executive officer and I said to him I didn't care what they did to me, it was my religion, while I was praying I was praying and nobody was going to stop me. 'Wait a minute, Goldkette. Don't get so excited. Take it easy,' the executive officer said to me and calmed me down. 'I'm Jewish too. Let's see if we can straighten this out.' And he did. He gave me a card: 'This man is at his devotions. When he is praying, he must not be interrupted or spoken to.' I used to put the card on my bed beside me while I was *davvening* and from that time I had no more trouble.

"I did my training at Scott Field and I met this girl in St. Louis where I used to go on passes. They had the USO, the Temple Sisterhood. We struck up a friendship and we got to know each other pretty well. I was in her home. When I shipped out, we corresponded with each other on a steady basis, and when I came home from the islands, when the war was over, I went down to see her. I had a big Packard car, a cigar in my hand, was all dressed up—I was still in uniform—but the minute I put my foot inside the door I knew my hopes were useless. She cried—she cried her eyes out. Boy, she cried to beat the band. She was committed with some other fellow. It was all settled and arranged. We never had a definite understanding in so many words, but I thought it was kind of expected between us. And there was still that correspondence. All young girls are wonderful. There is nothing better than a young girl in the whole world. Naturally I felt bad. 'Don't cry,' I told her. 'I'm going. I'm going. . .!' "

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Liberals & Libertarians

Milton Himmelfarb

TODAY WE know we must not interfere with consenting adults. We have pretty well established the principle of G. B. Shaw's actress friend: do whatever you want, as long as you don't scare the horses. In essence, that was inscribed over the portals of Rabelais's abbey of Thelema ("Will, Desire"): *Fay ce que vouldras*, do as you please, do whatever you want. There is one difference, however. For Rabelais, the men and women admitted through the portals would have been trained to an aversion from everything base and would want to do only what was noble and elevated. His inscription was, as we say, elitist. It enforced high entrance requirements. Our "consenting adults" is more democratic. It is an open-admissions policy.

Some feminists are less sure about noninterference. They say, for example, that since a pornographic book or movie—the heterosexual kind, at any rate—degrades women, it should not be allowed. If they were Catholic priests or Fundamentalist preachers or Orthodox rabbis, we would laugh at them, but they are feminists, so we do not laugh. Normally, upholders of civil liberties speak out against attempts to strengthen the prosecution and weaken the defense. In New York State no one spoke out while feminists were putting through a law that makes it easier to convict for rape. When the leader of a civil-liberties union wrote a book poking fun at licensing, as of taxi drivers, and at the denial of licenses to applicants with criminal records, the feminist who reviewed the book failed to see the humor of it. Riding in a taxi, she said, she would like to think that her driver had not been convicted of rape, or even arrested on accusations of rape.

It is not liberals who are the most intransigent upholders of liberty and of leaving people alone. Liberals are for achieving such ends as racial integration by such means as a court's order to transport children to distant schools. That is, liberals are for intervention by government, and consequently for government that does not leave people alone. Nor are liberals uniformly antiprohibitionist. Assuming nearly all liberals oppose the prohibition of marijuana, I do not assume nearly all would oppose the prohibition of cigarettes. On a plane you may sit in the smokers' section and not smoke, but you may not sit in the nonsmokers' section and smoke. Suppose you are a smoker and Ban-the-Cigarette militants have preempted the smokers' section. Will liberals represent you in your suit to make the prohibitionists pay for their conspiracy against you?

Libertarians might. Their politics is anarchism or near-anarchism, but because their economics is a laissez-faire purer than Adam Smith's, they figure prominently in Ferdinand V. Solara's useful *Key Influences in the American Right.*

In Boston a radio commentator everyone calls conservative has been leading the opposition to integration by busing. It turns out that he opposes not only compulsory attendance in a distant school but also compulsory attendance in school. He is a libertarian. Until he became ambitious for political office, he used to say he was against prohibiting heroin: we have no paternalistic right to abridge people's liberty to kill themselves, with heroin or anything else. About abortion, a feminist argument is that every woman is the mistress of her own body; that the fetus is part of her body; and that as she is free to have a tumorous part of her body excised from it, so is she free to have the fetal part excised. Feminists do not necessarily accept the libertarian argument against prohibiting heroin, but libertarians necessarily accept the feminist mistress-of-her-own body argument. They must say, therefore, that having no right to forbid a woman to addict herself (her body), we have no right to forbid her to addict her fetus—though no doubt libertarians will suspect that anyone who raises the question of an addict's fetus does so demagogically, an enemy of liberty exploiting the public's sentimentality.

The elevation of equality to a uniquely high rank among our values, before which all others must give way, is egalitarianism—a hypertrophy of the principle of equality. Its most recent and most portentous statement is John Rawls's *Theory of Justice.* Libertarianism is a hypertrophy of the principle of liberty. Its most recent and most portentous statement is Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia.**

Nozick justifies "the minimal night-watchman state": "The minimal state is the most extensive state that can be justified. Any state more exten-

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sive violates people's rights." For Murray N. Rothbard even a minimal state is too extensive. He is the libertarian who has written (in *Man, Economy, and State*, quoted by Nozick):

> Blackmail would not be illegal in the free society. For blackmail is the receipt of money in exchange for the service of not publicizing certain information about the other person. No violence or threat of violence to person or property is involved.

Nozick's free society is a shade less absolutely free. Of blackmail, which seems to interest libertarians, he says:

> So someone writing a book, whose research comes across information about another person which would help sales if included in the book, may charge another who desires that this information be kept secret (including the person who is the subject of the information) for refraining from including the information in the book. He may charge an amount of money equal to his expected difference in royalties between the book containing this information and the book without it; he may not charge the best price he could get from the purchaser of his silence.

"May charge . . . may not charge": ethics. Entering into the spirit of the thing, one asks whether charging only the expected difference in royalties acquits Nozick's writer of further obligation. Is not the writer ethically obliged to tell the publisher, so that he in turn can charge the expected difference in profits? When writer and publisher signed their contract—the most blessed word in the libertarian lexicon—did they not agree on fixed ratios between royalties and profits, and on more rather than fewer sales?

RAWLS takes a dim view of life's favoring the lucky over the unlucky, the attractive over the unattractive, the clever over the slow, the energetic over the torpid. His ideal is to apply to humanity the handicapper's art, which when perfect compensates with utmost precision for nature's differences. Compensatory equalization of that sort, as Marc F. Plattner notes (*Alternative*, May 1974), is the theme of Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*. In nature, young men and women attract each other. In artful comedic Athens dirty old men are compensated for their natural handicap by going to the head of the line for access to girls, while crones have first call on young men, and the most cronish first of all. A fine idea, correcting for nature's unfairness, becomes an ugly reality.

Libertarianism as such is not the theme of anything by Aristophanes, but in the *Clouds* he does pay his respects to sophists and to Unjust Reason defeating Just Reason. He would have enjoyed Nozick and Rothbard disputing, in the light of freedom and ethics, the fine points of blackmail.

Robert A. Nisbet says (*Public Interest*, Spring 1974) that Rawls's *Theory of Justice* is as much the work of a *philosophe* as of a philosopher. That is also true of Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*—intended, partly, as an answer to Rawls. Altogether, Nozick is Rawls's mirror image.

Individualists, especially libertarian ones, are not fond of meddling. Refusing to meddle while people are destroying themselves (or their fetuses) with heroin, why should they meddle with more direct suicide? And if it is wrong to prevent a neighbor from committing suicide, it may also be wrong to dissuade him. It may even be wrong not to help him commit suicide. One can imagine a range of possible requests: (a) "I have a blister on my toe. Be a good fellow and bring me the pistol in the drawer of my night table." (b) "I seem to be all thumbs today. Would you be so kind as to insert these cartridges into this revolver for me?" (c) "Just my luck! I've sprained my wrist. I would appreciate your holding this gun to my head and pulling the trigger." If a libertarian has trouble saying no to (a), will he say no to (c)?

Nozick disposes of suicide with a rhetorical trick: "On the assumption that people have a right to commit suicide, quit their jobs, and so forth. . . ." This is so breezily matter-of-fact that we hesitate to raise our hands, for fear of looking stupid. I used to think there might be some minute difference between committing suicide and quitting a job—and so forth—as well as between helping someone quit his job and helping him commit suicide.

About sadism, Nozick asks:

> May the majority of voters in a small village pass an ordinance against things that they find offensive being done on the *public* streets [his emphasis]? May they legislate against nudity or fornication or sadism (on consenting adults) or hand-holding by racially mixed couples on the streets? . . . If the majority may determine the limits on detestable behavior in public, may they, in addition to requiring that no one appear in public without wearing clothing, also require that no one appear in public without wearing a badge certifying that he has contributed *n* per cent of his income to the needy during the year, on the grounds that they find it offensive to look at someone not wearing the badge (not having contributed)?

This is the debater speaking, who wants to razzle-dazzle us into believing there is no ethical difference between interracial hand-holding and what sadists do to masochists. (Would the philosopher equate public nudity and fornication, or throw dust into our eyes with missing contribution badges?) Sadism means torturing and hurting. Jokes about torturing and hurting are called sick jokes.

Mirror images: both Rawls and Nozick are philosophy professors at Harvard. Both do analytical philosophy, in the dominant Anglo-American tra-

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dition. Both base their systems on an unnatural initial state of nature—no less than Nisbet's Rawls, Nozick "favors game theory and tidbits from free-market economics over ethnology, etc. . . ."

Nozick is writing about people, yet his bibliography, of more than 150 entries, lists almost nothing by political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists. He is writing about political philosophy as well as ethics—to Aristotle, politics was a branch of ethics—yet the bibliography has no Bible, no Plato, no Aristotle, no Machiavelli, no Hobbes, no Spinoza, no Adam Smith, no Jefferson, no Hegel, no Tocqueville, no Mill, no Durkheim, no Freud, no Dewey (and no Leo Strauss). Instead, it has three things by Ayn Rand, three by Rothbard, six by Nozick, six by the 19th-century American anarchists Lysander Spooner and Benjamin Tucker, and any number by modern game- and decision-theory economists.

Nozick declares for methodological individualism, which can be a useful caution against misplacing concreteness in abstractions like "society," but his individualism goes beyond method. Clearly, he believes he can learn most about human beings from economics (of a certain kind), though economists themselves have long insisted that their economic men, the buyers and sellers who figure in theoretical models, are not real people. We are not forever studying consumer reports and calculating discounts to the fifth decimal point, drawing contracts with each other, seeking redress for invasions of our space, comparison-shopping for the best buy in protective associations. (The protective association is a libertarian alternative to government.) We do not recognize ourselves, as we are or would like to be, in the libertarian portrait of us. Economic man is so far from being natural man that Emile Benveniste titles a chapter in his *Vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* "An Occupation Without a Name: Commerce." What he means is that there is no word for it in Indo-European, the common ancestor of Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Celtic, Germanic, Slavic, etc., and that individual languages of the Indo-European family have names for it that are vague or negative. English "business" is "busyness." Greek *askholia* is "absence of leisure," and so is Latin *negotium*.

"*Naturam expellas furca,*" writes Horace, "*tamen usque recurret*"—though you drive out nature with a pitchfork, it will always hurry back. The idea of a human nature is repeatedly driven out and repeatedly comes back. Jane Van Lawick-Goodall's *In the Shadow of Man* is not one of those big, bowwow pronouncements of ethological evidence for aggressiveness or a territorial imperative in humans. It is factual, closely observed, modest. It is practically ethnographical, because Dr. Van Lawick-Goodall was almost a participant-observer with a band of chimpanzees in an African forest. Who can deny that there is a chimpanzee nature? And who, after reading her book, can easily deny that there is a human nature?

Chimpanzees are by nature social animals. According to Aristotle, "man is by nature a political animal"—a being of the polis. Just before, he has said that "the polis is among the natural things." Just after, he likes Homer's shuddering epithets for the unsocial, solitary Cyclopes: "clanless, lawless, hearthless." (Cf. Genesis 4:14, Cain's fear of what will befall him, outcast and outlaw.)

THE POLIS was a state. Small in extent and population, it was nevertheless far more than a minimal state. Minimal states are not patrons of the arts. What would our culture be without Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, who wrote to compete for a polis's prizes? Much of the literature, architecture, sculpture, painting, and music that are the patrimony of the human race would not have been created in the absence of states. Thought itself, intellectual tradition, is not independent of states, or statehood. For better or worse, would the Jewish intellectual tradition of the past two thousand years have been the same if the Jews had had a state?

Like Rawls, Nozick prefers to belittle thought's links to culture, society, state. As a philosophy professor he surely has experienced what another colleague of his, in another university, once told me. When there is an international philosophical conference, the Europeans stay by themselves and the Anglo-Americans by themselves, with neither group understanding, and each feeling superior to, the other—the Anglo-Americans convinced that the Europeans are full of hot air, and the Europeans that the Anglo-Americans are trivial. Would Nozick do philosophy as he does if he had been educated in Germany, France, or Italy? Can he in fairness be haughty toward the soil in which his way of doing philosophy is rooted?

His answer is sarcasm:

> . . . the fact that we partially are "social products" in that we benefit from current patterns created by the multitudinous actions of a long string of long-forgotten people, . . . institutions, ways of doing things . . . does not create in us a general floating debt which the current society can collect and use as it will.

In effect Nozick asks his benefactors, the society and tradition to which he admits he is indebted, "But what have you done for me lately?" Because he is a specialist in ethics and a Jew who is demonstratively not non-Jewish, he must know why this will not do. "But what have you done for me lately?" is the ingrate's question, and ingratitude is dubiously ethical. It is the retort of non-Jewish Jews when anyone hints that, owing something to their having been born Jews, they should feel some Jewish obligation. They too make light of "a long string of long-forgotten people" and "floating debt."

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Elsewhere Nozick speaks differently:

> Each existing person is the product of a process wherein the one sperm cell that succeeds is no more deserving than the millions that fail. Should we wish that process had been "fairer" as judged by Rawls's standards, that all "inequities" in it had been rectified? *We should be apprehensive about any principle that would condemn morally the very sort of process that brought us to be,* a principle that therefore would undercut the very legitimacy of our existence.

The emphasis is mine, the self-refutation Nozick's.

Like ethology, historical linguistics testifies against libertarian individualism. Take the very word for "self" in Indo-European, **swe-*, **seu-*, or **se-*. Calvert Watkins (in the *American Heritage Dictionary*) and Benveniste agree that it is also the word for "in-group" (Watkins, "kin group")! In "*self*" and "*sui*cide" it has the individual meaning. In "*sis*ter" (German "*Schwes*ter") it has the collective meaning: Indo-European **swe-sor-* is the female, **sor-*, who belongs to the group **swe-*. The *sod-* of "sodality" (fellowship, company) is from an expanded form, **swed-*. In Greek, expanded **swedh-* becomes *eth-*: ethos, ethics, ethnic, ethology, ethnography. Benveniste concludes that for the speakers of Indo-European more than five thousand years ago—people rather closer than Nozick's calculators to a state of nature—selfhood, individuality, was inseparable from belonging to a group.

Nisbet traces Rawls's famous "original position" to the older *philosophes'* unhistorical, artificial "state of nature"—adding that Rawls has less excuse than they had because he should know more than they could. But Rawls does not want to be bothered with facts. "We want," he says, "to define the original position so that we can get the desired solution."

Nozick is not very different. At the beginning he gives as his basic premise that a hypothetical original "non-state situation in which people generally satisfy moral constraints and generally act as they ought . . . is not wildly optimistic; it does not assume that all people act exactly as they should." The fallacy here is not optimism, or pessimism. The fallacy is that Nozick's "people" are atoms. He conceals from himself that groups are real and that people do not feel the same moral constraints outside their group as inside. He ignores Deuteronomy 23:21—"you may charge interest on your loan to a stranger, but not on your loan to your brother [*or* countryman]"—which is Benjamin N. Nelson's point of departure for his now classic *Idea of Usury: From Tribal Brotherhood to Universal Otherhood.* Hobbes's "war of everyone against everyone" may itself be an individualistic fallacy. Primitively, it is not that every individual wages war against every other, it is that every group wages war against every other. Benveniste confirms linguistically that within a city peace was the norm, with fratricide and civil strife the dreaded exception, while between cities war was the norm, with peace the exception. When, in Genesis 16:12, it is said of Ishmael that "his hand shall be against everyone and everyone's hand against him," the life of the Ishmaelites, the nomadic tribes of the desert, is being described. Their morality is peace within and raiding without. An impressive achievement of Nozick as philosopher is to demonstrate how Rawls's book is in a way one long tautology, with answers predetermined by the choice of questions. Nozick's book is equally tautological, his individualist premises compelling his conclusions.

I HAVE said that Nozick is demonstratively not of those whom Isaac Deutscher, referring to himself and invoking masters like Spinoza and Trotsky, proudly called non-Jewish Jews. Nozick goes out of his way to defend Shylock against Portia. He quotes Buber, Louis Ginzberg's *Legends of the Bible,* I. B. Singer, literature about the kibbutz. He tells Jewish stories and gives Jewish examples.

This is somewhat unexpected. A priori, libertarianism should be more appealing to non-Jewish than to Jewish (or non-non-Jewish) Jews. So long as traditions and traditional communities exist, a non-Jewish Jew must be an outsider. Radicalism promises, "No more tradition's chains shall bind us." Trotsky thought to break those chains by Marxist revolution. But libertarianism also seeks to break the chains of tradition and traditional community. For the anti-traditional, now, libertarianism can be the functional equivalent of radicalism—with one great advantage. Trotsky's theory has been weighed in the balance of practice and found wanting. His vision was a mirage, false. The libertarian vision cannot be falsified. There can be no reality to test it.

To Nozick, in sum, as presumably to that Boston radio commentator, a rabbi's son, Judaism's not being libertarian ought to present more difficulties than it apparently does. Of course, neither is Judaism conservative, if conservative is what those organizations listed in Solara's booklet are. Nor is it liberal, even if many who should know better like to infer from the liberalism of Jews that Judaism must be liberal. Judaism is—well, it is Judaism. Though the language of politics in Josephus' time abounded in -cracies and -archies—from aristocracy, democracy, and ochlocracy to anarchy, monarchy, and oligarchy—for Judaism he had to coin a new word: theocracy, a polity ruled by God.

Empirically, the more undilutedly Jewish a group of Jews, the less liberal (or libertarian): rabbis unafraid of being called censors are likely to be Orthodox. Doctrinally, it should be enough that liberalism, and libertarianism above all, has

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to do with rights, but classical Judaism with duties (in this respect, as in some others, resembling classical Hellenism). More than classical Judaism says that a poor man has a right to my or the community's charity, it says that I and the community have a duty to give him charity.

Consenting adults? Zimri son of Salu and Cozbi daughter of Zur the Midianite were consenting adults, but Phinehas son of Elazar son of Aaron the priest followed them into their chamber and stabbed them through the belly with his spear, thus, by his zeal for the Lord, turning back His wrath and checking the plague that had killed twenty-four thousand Israelites. Both for the Bible (Numbers 25) and for the Rabbis the zealous Phinehas is a model of right thinking and right doing.

Do whatever you want, do as you please? In biblical Hebrew to do as one wants or pleases is "to do what is right in one's own eyes." That is bad. Only to do what is right in the Lord's eyes is good. "You shall do what is right and good in the LORD's eyes, so that it may go well with you . . ." (Deuteronomy 6:18, after the Ten Commandments and the Shema'; and similarly 12:28). "You shall not do at all as we do here now, everyone whatever is right in his own eyes" (12:8). "In those days, there being no king in Israel, everyone would do what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6 and 21:25, the last verse in the book, introducing the books about the kings).

For liberals the Prophets are great because they teach "social justice" (so called to distinguish it from unsocial justice?). Among them Amos is held to be preeminent. If only because Amos 2:6 ff. is read in the synagogue—as the Prophet lesson accompanying the Torah lesson (Genesis 37-40) about Joseph sold into slavery in Egypt—it is one of the better-known passages in that book:

> Thus says the LORD: For three crimes of Israel, for four, I will not reverse it [sc., My punishment]: because they sell the righteous for silver [rabbinically, Joseph is "the righteous," having spurned the advances of his master's wife], and the needy for a pair of shoes. . . . and a man and his father go to the same girl, profaning My holy name.

May Amos justly interfere when a man and his father go to the same girl? All three are consenting adults. And though the "girl" is a cult prostitute, it is uncertain that she and the two men think they are profaning the Lord's holy name. They may be hallowing Baal's name, or Astarte's, but it is not precluded that—devotees of the syncretistic, pre-prophetic Israelite folk religion—they wish to hallow the Lord's name.

In either case, Amos does not show much religious tolerance. We solve the problem of his illiberalism by forgetting it. The Amos we remember is the denouncer of those who sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes.

LIBERTARIANS, indeed, may think Amos illiberal for denouncing sellers of the righteous and needy. A right to buy implies a right to sell, and vice versa. If I have the right to sell myself to you, you must have the right to buy and then to sell me. Nozick says we have those rights: "The . . . question about an individual is whether a free system will allow him to sell himself into slavery. I believe that it would." What system freer than one that secures the freedom to be a slave?

As to profaning the Lord's holy name, the Hebrew verb can equally be rendered "pollute." Unlike liberals, libertarians are not intense about pollution. They say it is all right for you to pollute, provided you compensate those whose persons or rights or possessions your polluting has invaded. The Lord's holy name is His possession. If the man and his father and the girl have polluted it, let them and the Lord agree on compensation to Him: so and so many burnt offerings, perhaps. In the history of religion such compensation for such pollution is old and respectable.

The difference between the Bible's understanding of pollution and ours is that ours is material and chemical, the Bible's moral and cultic. (In Latin and almost to the present day in English, "pollute/pollution" was closer to the biblical sense than to ours.) If today we say that the land will vomit us out because we have polluted it, we mean that we have fed it garbage, junk, and exhaust. The Bible tells why the Land of Canaan vomited out its pre-Israelite inhabitants in Leviticus 18, *the climactic Torah lesson on Yom Kippur*, which is about pollution and abomination. Besides the sacrifice of children to Molech, these are the unchastities. Traditional Jews would no more tolerate them in the name of liberty than most of us would tolerate, in the name of liberty, what we know to be the real pollution.

In Liberal synagogues not Leviticus 18 but 19, or part of it, is read on Yom Kippur. Of 19:16—". . . do not stand by the blood of your neighbor: I am the LORD"—Rashi, repeating a midrash, interprets the first half as "do not watch your neighbor dying [while you do nothing] if you can save him." The second half he interprets as "I am He Who can be relied upon to reward [those who try to save their neighbors] and to punish [those who do not]." So much for noninterference with suicide.

As for our right over our own bodies or our right as masochists to have ourselves tortured by sadists, Judaism knows no such right. J. David Bleich (*Tradition*, Fall 1974) informs us that contemporary rabbinical jurisconsults even doubt whether Jewish law permits elective plastic surgery:

> Judaism recognizes divine proprietorship over all objects of creation, including the human body. Judaism expressly teaches that the individual has no proprietary rights with regard

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to his own body and hence is forbidden to mutilate or wound his own body (see Rambam *Hilkhot Chovel u-Mazik* 5:1). A person's body is committed to him for safekeeping and hence self-mutilation or any form of assault upon the body is viewed as a breach of this stewardship. Dispensation for intervention in physiological processes for therapeutic purposes is granted in the biblical directive, ". . . and he shall surely heal" (Exodus 21:19). Thus, a surgical operation to correct a deformed or malfunctioning organ is specifically excluded from the prohibition against "wounding."

. . . Plastic surgery undertaken solely for cosmetic or aesthetic purposes differs significantly from other corrective procedures. The obvious *halakhic* problem associated with plastic surgery is whether or not such procedures involve infractions of the law against wounding. . . . A further, more general, question is raised by the risk to life involved in such procedures. Any form of surgery, particularly when performed under general anesthesia, poses at least a minimal, but nevertheless significant, threat to life. Is it permissible . . . to expose oneself to such danger for cosmetic purposes? . . .

Both scriptural and liturgical, the most emphatic statement of Jewish utopianism is Isaiah 11, which prophesies a future when "they shall neither hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain." Kimhi interprets "My holy mountain" broadly, as referring to the whole Land of Israel. May we not interpret it more broadly still, as referring to the whole earth? "The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof" (Psalms 24:1).

AN either/or choice between individual and society is like the choice between free will and determination. The Jewish answer is to refuse the choice. R. Akiba says: All is foreseen (i.e., God is omniscient, He knows what will happen) but we have free will.

Not even Abraham, starting from fifty innocent, dared try to bargain the Lord into agreeing that Sodom would be spared if it had fewer than ten. Did it have as many as nine? If so, they perished with the numerous wicked. That, as they say, is life—unfair. The innocent minority perishes with, suffers the punishment of, the guilty majority. I am "I," and I am also a descendant of my ancestors and a citizen of my city.

On the other hand, in II Kings 14 (and II Chronicles 25) Amaziah son of Joash, king of Judah, executes his father's assassins but spares their children, "in accordance with what is written in the book of Moses' Torah, that the LORD commands as follows: 'Fathers shall not be put to death for sons, nor sons for fathers, but only for his own sin shall anyone be put to death' "—an almost verbatim quotation from Deuteronomy 24:16. Jeremiah (31:28) and Ezekiel (18:2) echo Deuteronomy in repudiating the folk's proverb, "Parents eat unripe grapes, and their children's teeth are set on edge."

Here we see the Jewish unwillingness to decide one way or the other. In reality, the folk's proverb was sound doctrine, in complete agreement with the revelation to Moses of the Lord's attributes (Exodus 34: 7):

> He extends kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; *yet He does not remit all punishment, but visits the iniquity of fathers upon children and children's children, upon the third and fourth generations.*

But it does not end there. That passage figures prominently in our liturgy for a holy day falling on a weekday—only cut short so as to mean the opposite:

> He extends kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; *and acquitting.*

A singular "pious fraud," because it is not as if the liturgy were altering something obscure. Exodus 34:7 is read from the scroll eight times a year. Once during Passover and once during Sukkot, normally, it is read immediately after the triple chanting of its inversion-by-truncation!

Could it have been such a reserve about the either/or—*either* the individual *or* the community—that influenced Nozick to write a last chapter, "A Framework for Utopia," which turns everything around, almost? Here autonomy inheres no longer in the individual but in the community (or commune), which may be anarchist or authoritarian or anything between, and the individual's liberty is his right to seek out the community that suits him best. Earlier, Nozick formulated his justification of the minimal state individualistically: "Any state more extensive violates people's rights." Now he formulates it communally: "The framework for [the communitarian] utopia that we have described is equivalent to the minimal state."

That is better, but not yet good enough.

Especially these days, few in the academy have any high regard for pluralist democracy. Defending it against depreciators to Left and Right, the European political scientist Ernst Fraenkel has cited Pascal. Pascal said that unity without multiplicity is tyranny, and multiplicity without unity is confusion.

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Holocaust

THE WAR AGAINST THE JEWS 1933-1945. By LUCY S. DAWIDOWICZ. *Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 460 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by ROBERT ALTER

LUCY DAWIDOWICZ's meticulous historical study is an indispensable book for understanding both the peculiar nature of Nazism and the behavior of European Jewry under Nazi domination. On the simplest level of indispensability, this "historical narrative," based on a vast literature of documentary and secondary materials in German, Yiddish, Hebrew, Polish, French, and English, manages to make consecutive sense out of a series of events which in their sheer horror often seem to present themselves to the imagination as dislocated images, revelations of some ultimate abyss beyond history. Mrs. Dawidowicz's step-by-step account of the Nazi legislative isolation of the Jews, then of the various geographical and chronological stages of actual ghettoization, imprisonment, planned starvation, and mass murder, is as lucid and complete a rendering of these ghastly events in all their political and bureaucratic concatenations as we are likely to get in a single volume.

The treatment here of Jewish responses to the Nazi terror is noteworthy for its fullness and balance on issues where others have been tendentiously selective, whether from an apologetic impulse or a facilely judgmental one. Mrs. Dawidowicz particularly differs from earlier commentators—such as Raul Hilberg and Hannah Arendt—in having an intimate familiarity with the larger background of Jewish history and a minute understanding of the intricate makeup of the Jewish communities Hitler encircled to destroy. She demonstrates in concrete detail the extraordinary strength of Jewish solidarity and of the Jewish determination to survive under literally impossible circumstances, but she does not neglect the many self-serving actions of the various political and socio-economic groups within the ghettos; and, free of polemic exaggeration, she makes it perfectly clear that only in Warsaw did Jewish armed resistance achieve anything like a momentary success.

On the frequently obfuscated question of the *Judenräte*, the local Jewish ruling councils created by Nazi orders, Mrs. Dawidowicz provides a bracingly sane perspective. Her exposition is quite candid about the more sordid aspects of the *Judenräte*, the nepotism, the favoritism, the expressions of class interest, and the manifestations of autocracy or even megalomania in a few of the Jewish community heads. However, she also makes it persuasively clear that even the most dubious of the *Judenrat* leaders were trying desperately to use what scant means the Nazis permitted them, to save whatever Jewish lives could be saved, while they were hardly in a position to realize that the Nazis intended no Jewish lives to be saved. As Mrs. Dawidowicz pointedly observes in her final summary, there were, after all, no Jewish Quislings and Lavals, no leaders who actually adopted the goals and values of the Nazis; and whatever the *Judenrat* officials might have tried to do, there was no real alternative open to them, nothing they could have done actually to prevent the deportations and the mass murders. In any case, retrospective condemnations of the *Judenräte* seem to forget the primary fact that the councils were formed, operated, frequently reconstituted, and finally themselves "liquidated," with German guns pointing steadily at their heads.

In regard to the Jews, Mrs. Dawidowicz fills in certain factual gaps and redresses a balance of judgment. In regard to the Germans, I think she provides a crucially important redefinition of the role of anti-Semitism in the Nazi movement. Conventional wisdom tends to imagine anti-Semitism as a necessary instrument in Hitler's rise to power: the Jews could serve as scapegoats for Germany's past failures and recent defeat, as safe targets for pent-up rage and frustration under Hitler's totalitarianism, as the hated embodiment of alienness against which a new German solidarity might be forged. In contrast to such notions, Mrs. Dawidowicz argues—to my mind, with complete convincingness—that the Jew as universal Enemy was an absolutely essential element of the Nazi world-picture, so that the ideology itself, the racial utopia the Nazis envisaged, *could only be realized* through an Armageddon in which Aryan would confront Jew and utterly destroy him. In this view, then, the adjective of finality in "Final Solution" carries distinctly apocalyptic overtones for the Nazi mind: a glorious End of Days was to be brought about by the extirpation of the loathsome vermin/monster (paranoia sees from both ends of the telescope) that had polluted all human history. Hence the uniqueness of the Final Solution, our very necessity to coin a special term—genocide—for it:

> Never before in modern history had one people made the killing of another the fulfillment of the ideology, in whose pursuit means were identical with ends. History has, to be sure, recorded terrible massacres and destruction that one people perpetrated against another, but all—however cruel and unjustifiable—were intended to achieve instrumental ends, being means to ends, not ends in themselves.

Mrs. Dawidowicz shows how the basis of this apocalyptic anti-Semitism was present in Hitler's thinking as early as *Mein Kampf*, and how he and the followers he infected with his vision remained unswervingly faithful to the idea to the very end. The positive theo-

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logical content of genocide for the Nazis explains why they continued to carry it out even to the manifest detriment of their own vital strategic interests. At a time when Germany was fighting a war on two fronts, when every train car and every able-bodied man was urgently needed for the military effort, the *Wehrmacht* often had to struggle with the SS over allocation of resources, and often it was the SS that won out. Even with the conventional war effort collapsing, the extermination machinery was driven on relentlessly. The transports of Jews from Greece to Auschwitz, for example, took precedence over all other freight movements as late as July 1944, when the Germans were already beginning to evacuate their troops from Greece. The ghettos where skilled Jewish laborers were producing materials needed by the German army were wiped out according to ideological plan because to destroy all Jews was finally deemed more essential to the real German war effort than, say, to clothe German soldiers on the Russian front.

THE title of this study makes the general point with trenchant succinctness: Hitler's whole regime was a twelve-year war against the Jews, and the expansionist war he launched against the several European nations in 1939 was virtually a cover for his war against the Jews, a means of obtaining an arena, and with it a large Jewish population, in which he could carry out mass murder free from legal or political restraint. Thus, when Hitler invaded Russia in 1941, the conventional army was accompanied by four divisions of an ideological army, the *Einsatzgruppen* or striking forces that swept eastward from the Baltic regions in the North to the Crimea in the South, attacking and massacring the "enemy"—the Jewish civilian population, men, women, and children, of all the cities and towns and villages they entered. It is estimated that the *Einsatzgruppe* killers were responsible for nearly a third of the six million Jews slaughtered by the Nazis. The remaining prisoners of this unilateral war were then driven into ghettos while modern centralized installations were prepared for their efficient annihilation.

In pointing up the connection between Hitler's ideological war and his conventional one, Lucy Dawidowicz notes a revealing slip in the Nazi leader's recollection of his own statement upon the German invasion of Poland. The text of his speech to the Reichstag on the morning of September 1, 1939 contains no reference to the Jews. But in the next three years, on at least four separate occasions, Hitler cited his September 1, 1939, speech as an open declaration of war-to-the-death of Aryan upon Jew. "You will recall still," he said in November 1942, "that meeting of the Reichstag in which I declared: If Jewry perchance imagines that it can bring about an international world war for the annihilation of the European races, then the consequence will be not the annihilation of the European races, but on the contrary, it will be the annihilation of Jewry in Europe." In Hitler's mind, then, general war and the annihilation of the Jews were inextricably bound together. Practically, the former was necessary in order to carry out the latter. Conceptually, I suspect that the two were profoundly confused, so that Hitler was never altogether clear on whether he was engaged in an imperialist war for earthly *Lebensraum* or undertaking a crusade against a mythic enemy that, in the distorted perspective of collective paranoia, had come to seem more menacing than the real armies which the *Wehrmacht* confronted. The political implementation of an eschatalogical vision had never before attained such insane, cataclysmic proportions.

"The Final Solution," Mrs. Dawidowicz concludes, "was a new phenomenon in human history." Precisely for that reason, one can hardly judge the victims for the inadequacy of their political or psychological response to what was overtaking them. For the same reason, one can only deplore the promiscuous application today of "Holocaust" and "genocide" to a variety of contemporary situations —including those in which Jews are involved. Even when the State of Israel must persist under the constant threat of a massive attack that could destroy many thousands of its citizens, the fiercest Arab political intransigence is still not Nazi dedication to fulfilling the apocalypse—which is why the Middle East conflict, however dismal, is not permanently hopeless. Perhaps Jews from the Bible onward have been too mesmerized by patterns of recurrence in their history; and of course one dare not neglect the possibility of recurrence; but Lucy Dawidowicz has made an important contribution to lucidity by fostering a respect for the awful uniqueness of the greatest disaster the Jews have known.

Give

SOCIAL POLICY. By RICHARD TITMUSS. *Pantheon. 160 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by ROGER STARR

THIS brief book consists of a group of introductory lectures which the late Richard Titmuss gave in similar form each year to incoming students at the London School of Economics. It is easy to guess that students of social work must have loved them, while the faculty colleagues who edited them into this book treated them with such humble reverence that they did not dare to shape them into a consecutive whole. The resulting book is a paean to the importance of social policy. Despite the discontinuities between the chapters, a tripartite message comes through very clearly: social policy is no mere housekeeping chore concerned with the health of the waifs, strays, and laggards of an industrial society; social policy is the vital part of the economic system because it offers ethical meaning to the system; redistribution is the goal of social policy, but it must be planned meticulously lest it work in the wrong direction, offering more to those who already have more. Give, says the essential Titmuss, give until it stops hurting.

In assigning to social policy the

ROGER STARR, *a frequent contributor, is currently the Administrator of New York City's Housing and Development Administration. His new book,* Housing and the Money Market, *has just been published by Basic Books.*

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chief responsibility for the redistribution of the material goods and the services provided by the economic system, Titmuss appears to be primarily interested in the effect of this redistribution on those who design and support it. The benefactors are to become the primary beneficiaries of their concern with helping others. Titmuss makes clear that this good moral effect would be dissipated if social policy were designed to augment efficiency instead of purely to redress inequities in distribution. Thus, the originator of social policy is urged not to consider whether or not those who receive the redistributed goods will become, as a result, better able to provide for themselves in the future. The mixture of a gill of poisonous self-interest in a gallon of altruism eats away at its ethical soundness. This view contraverts such ethical philosophers as Maimonides, who wanted donors to be concerned with the future of their benefactions and assigned the highest rank in the hierarchy of charity to that gift which enabled the recipient, ultimately, to manage on his own.

Those who have read Titmuss's earlier book on the donation of blood for medical purposes, *The Gift Relationship,* will recognize the emphasis on an act of giving which is untarnished by any shadow of practical calculation. The emphasis on redistribution by Titmuss will be familiar also to readers of Daniel P. Moynihan's recent discussion of the connection between Fabian socialism—with its bias against production and in favor of redistribution—and Third World political economics.*

To the familiar chorus of those who accuse industrialization of destroying the quality of human life, Titmuss adds some novel and interesting reflections on the difficulty of pinning down who is exactly responsible for which element of destruction. Titmuss emphasizes that the costs of industrialization are no more uniformly distributed than its benefits. Accordingly, it falls to the maker of social policy to ascertain who pays most for economic activity, and

* "The United States in Opposition," COMMENTARY, March 1975.

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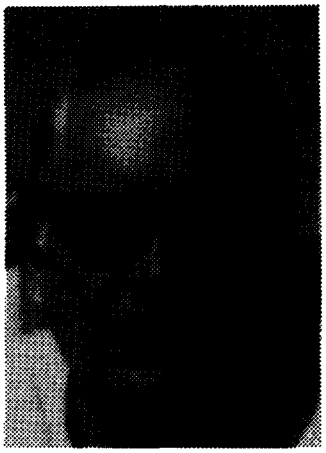

John Murray Cuddihy talks about the Jewish solution to the "Jewish Problem"

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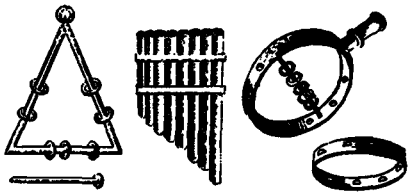

A fresh examination of the Jewish musical heritage for the inquiring layman and the professional as well, this new volume makes the manifold aspects of Jewish music easily accessible. The 500-some entries listed alphabetically include definitions of Jewish musical terms and vocabulary, the origin and structure of Biblical and post-Biblical instruments, histories and descriptions of Jewish musical organizations and movements, biographies of representative composers and musicians, descriptive musical works, and principal published collections.
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to redress the excess of costs as well as the shortfall of benefits. Titmuss offers his students a choice among three types of equalizers: legal action, private insurance, and publicly-owned redistributive agencies. The last resemble private insurance, but in effect offer subsidized transfer payments from government. Titmuss chooses this kind of public-insurance system over its alternatives, probably because legal action and private insurance enhance the wealth of private non-needy people in the course of helping the poor and the deprived.

To elucidate the difficulties in designing a social policy which can successfully redistribute both the costs and benefits of economic activity, Titmuss cites a study made in 1918 of the laundry problem in the English Midlands. The study revealed a significant difference in household soap costs incurred by families in Manchester, then a dirty city, and Harrogate, a nearby, cleaner city. According to Titmuss, the study indicated that the costs of air pollution fell more heavily on the Manchester population than the Harrogate population because the Manchester people bought more soap. Worse, from the point of view of designing social redistribution, the impact on the Manchester families was itself unequal: the extra soap represented a larger proportional share of a poor family's budget than a wealthier family's. Hence, in planning a proper redistribution, one had to decide who needed help most: those who used the most soap, or those who had the lowest income to begin with. Because the policy-makers of 1918 were unable to make this and other important calculations, Titmuss tells us, the costs of the smoke were allowed to fall where they might. Today, however, he tells us with a sigh of relief, technological progress has made possible the elimination of smoke altogether, and therefore it is unnecessary to allocate the costs and distribute the compensatory benefits.

Would that the problem were so easily addressed. Surely the stacks of Manchester could always have been made to stop belching smoke; one had merely to extinguish the fires beneath them. Who would have paid in unemployment and production lost for the cost of that decision? If, instead of damping down the fires altogether, a conservation-minded government had merely required the installation of expensive remedial equipment, the new costs might have been borne by all the consumers of the products of Manchester through higher prices. If the products then could not be sold at the requisite prices, a differential subsidy might have been borne by all the people in the economic system, through the intermediation of government. But how long can government "subsidize" remedial measures in how many industries? It may turn out that the cost of the new technology, which Titmuss welcomes as a relief from problems in social-cost allocation, is itself too heavy for anyone to bear; the living standard declines. The tradition of Fabian socialism established itself when the British empire was at the zenith of its economic power. To pretend, as do redistributionists of the Titmuss school, that Britain remains sufficiently wealthy to afford redistribution is to mimic a Chekhovian family which refuses to recognize the change in its condition, and continues in aristocratic attitudes long after they have become awkward and, to the playwright, comic.

Even if, however, redistribution were still justifiable on the basis of British wealth, and even if the primary problem in Britain were not, as everyone but the Titmuss school seems to know, the real decline in the level of economic production, the distributionism proposed by Titmuss under government supervision would be difficult to achieve. This is its first weakness. Years of redistributive income taxes, steep inheritance taxes, and a general bias in favor of progressive taxation, have left the Western world with very little change in the degree of concentration of wealth among the population.

The effort to ignore the realities of economic production constitutes the second major weakness of redistribution as the main goal of humane social policy. Titmuss,

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more particularly in his book on blood, would substitute ethical considerations for economic calculations; this moral hubris may be charming, as in Titmuss's descriptions of his treatment for terminal cancer by the National Health Service, or scary, as in the aspects of that treatment which he chooses to ignore. Clearly a man of great personal courage, Titmuss speaks of the impact of waiting for cobalt treatment at a large, British hospital in company with other disease victims. His fellow patients covered the gamut of British caste and class, yet they were treated in order of arrival, not in descending level of status. Titmuss is buoyed by the feeling that the National Health System has been able to cut down the hedges of the repressive British social pattern, and that he, as a supporter of that system, may take a small measure of pride in the achievement.

So much for the charming. The scary part comes when Titmuss reflects on the extremely expensive character of cobalt treatment. In his case alone, the National Health scheme paid for 17 hours of treatment at a cost of £10 per minute. What Titmuss celebrates here is far more than equality of treatment; it is equal access to a very expensive form of treatment. If Britain's economic system were unable to bear the cost of the cobalt, the laboratories, the equipment, and the personal services required to give the treatment, the result would be a mere equality of poverty of little significance, spiritual or otherwise, to anyone.

A third difficulty with the redistributive goal involves the very question of morality itself. Is the sense of duty and achievement for Titmuss and his associates truly an ennobling experience, or is it merely a form of moral smugness? Just as Maimonides praised most highly those who were concerned to render self-sustaining their unfortunate brethren, he put on one of the lower rungs of the hierarchy those who were motivated primarily to derive pleasure or satisfaction from their benefactions. An air of piety attaches itself to the distributionists and to the purgatorial process which Titmuss urges on his followers, a process of stripping off from redistribution any accidental benefit that might be enjoyed by those not entirely entitled to be the objects of social policy. It is surely commonplace in pietistic social movements to learn that the more practitioners are urged to cleanse themselves of *material* gratification from the policy they adopt, the more likely they are to derive instead an even more stifling *moral* gratification. If the Titmuss brand of redistribution does indeed rest its case on ethical grounds, that case rests on ambiguity. The purer the self-denial in material terms, the more likely it is to become a tyrannical righteousness, perhaps even a secular form of theocracy.

Finally, a fourth difficulty in the path of redistribution presents itself with special force to the American reader of Titmuss: the anti-American bias. At first this seems to be carelessness, or unfamiliarity

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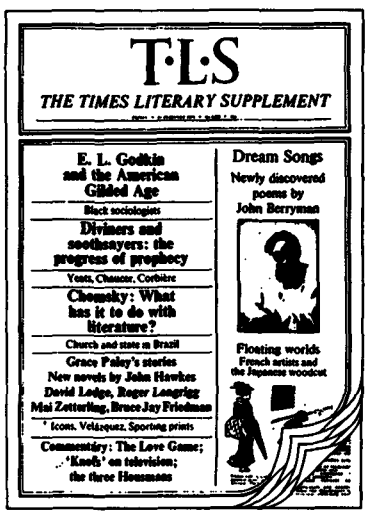
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with the American scene; then, as one reads further, the anti-Americanism seems a personal peculiarity; still further, and the anti-Americanism becomes the logical extension of the Titmuss position. For the United States, as Titmuss imagines it, is his Horrible Example—a nation wallowing in market economics unmodified by progressive humanitarianism, a nation obsessed with the shortcomings of government activity and purblind to the defects of the profit motive. Just as, in Elizabethan England, when dynastic wars were ending with the ascension of the house of Henry Tudor, Niccolo Machiavelli served as the Horrible Example of a politicized, secular kingship and encouraged Englishmen to accept the divine rights of the new line, so the Titmuss view of America serves to instruct waverers in the dangers of ignoring Fabian altruism in the political economy.

The enthusiasm with which Titmuss pounces on his instructive example sometimes causes him to loosen his grip on the facts. Thus, on the second page of *Social Policy,* the following arresting statement occurs: "It is not widely known that during the first six months of 1971 more people were murdered in New York than all the American soldiers killed in Vietnam during the same six months." The statement becomes even more arresting when a bit of research reveals that the Department of Defense reported 1,105 Americans killed in combat during the first six months of 1971. The New York City Police Department lists but 651 homicides during the same period. Since murders are only a subclass of homicides, the Titmuss discrepancy is even bigger than it appears to be, and inspires queasy feelings about other statistics in Titmuss's lectures. Decrying the redistributive efforts of private insurance against social risks like workmen's compensation (the American practice), Titmuss claims that private insurance involves administrative costs of 30 to 40 per cent of premium income, while public insurance involves only 5 to 10 per cent in administrative costs One wonders whether Titmuss quotes the figures correctly or whether they cover comparable activities.

The references to the United States, which abound in the book, contain faulty observations as well as imprecise or doubtful facts. Titmuss writes: "Voluntary hospitals in the United States, for example, have public wards for indigents which tend to be full of black people. This can be contrasted with the integrated wards and outpatient departments of British hospitals under the National Health Service." The public wards of the voluntary hospital nearest me are, in fact, nearly empty, thanks to Blue Cross and Medicare; the semi-private accommodations are integrated. But the major racial difference between my city and London results from the fact that the non-white population in my city approaches 40 per cent; London's is much smaller. Didn't Titmuss observe the difference?

When I was a very minor functionary in the government's overseas information office in 1942, we blamed Hollywood for many of the mistaken notions then current abroad about the American reality. Reading Titmuss, I find it easier to believe that Americans are imagined to have horns because these pointy protuberances are needed to pin together the inconsistencies in the hubristic Fabian conscience.

Sketchbook

THE TWENTIES: FROM NOTEBOOKS AND DIARIES OF THE PERIOD. By EDMUND WILSON. Edited with an introduction by LEON EDEL. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 608 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by JAMES ATLAS

FEW writers have been so compelling that everything they wrote was certain to be of interest; and of those, even fewer have been critics. The current fashion of unearthing and publishing a great author's every scrap has been brought about primarily by academics requiring new texts to edit. No doubt the notebooks of Coleridge, Hawthorne, or Henry James provide invaluable evidence about their imaginative lives; even so, our interest in them depends on a knowledge of the finished works to which they act as corollaries. It would be hard to imagine a critic, whose writing generally constitutes another sort of corollary, leaving notebooks of any great literary value. Except, of course, for Edmund Wilson.

But then, Wilson was an exception in virtually everything he did. A man of letters during an age which had no place for such occupations, a journalist more learned than most of those whose books he reviewed, and a multilingual scholar in a culture devoted to specialization, he was an extraordinary character besides. His personality was everywhere in his writings, bantering, rhapsodizing, endlessly curious. The extravagant temperament displayed in his two (largely unread) novels, *I Thought of Daisy* and *Memoirs of Hecate County,* was less invented than autobiographical, as a reading of his notebooks will reveal. The narrator in these novels, whose pursuit of women and consumption of alcohol Wilson registers with the same tireless avidity he always applied to literary subjects, relates his adventures in a voice of authorial impersonality; in the notebooks themselves, it is Wilson whose revelations, while still impersonal, provide a document of the 20's in some respects more vivid and intimate than Fitzgerald's famous books.

Part of Wilson's interest as a writer derived from his beliefs that literature was a direct celebration of experience no less than an aesthetic enhancement of it. He was never much taken with elaborate theories of criticism or the relation between literature and culture, preferring to read and write about men's activities in the world. What fascinated him above all was what he so appreciated in Michelet, "the expansion of a limited individual experience into a great work of the imagination"; and he was so con-

JAMES ATLAS, *whose essays have appeared in* London Magazine, American Poetry Review, *and other periodicals, is currently at work on a biography of Delmore Schwartz.*

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scious of the living force behind such works that he would often draw attention to the states of mind revealed in supposedly neutral historical prose, like Francis Parkman's (discussed in *O Canada)* or Michelet's. Wilson himself was capable of writing in any genre, and incapable of being commonplace, so that to think of him primarily as a critic is to deprive him of the classification he really deserves: he was one of the greatest imaginative writers America has ever produced.

Some of the clearest evidence of his achievement can be found in *A Prelude* and *Upstate*, those remarkable autobiographies designed "to catch *sur le vif* things that struck me as significant or interesting." Such a modest evaluation, from the first page of *A Prelude*, should be supplemented by the closing sentence of *Upstate*, where he noted, "I am glad to have had some share of the life of this planet and of northern New York." This descent from the largest generality to the biographical particular seems somehow fitting; he was devoted to just such mediations, observing in a specific work or situation its relation to the life of society. Wilson had a novelist's eye for detail, and could render a casual remark or scene with such muted effectiveness that it seldom required commentary. In these journals, a profusion of poems, anecdotes, conversations, and asides mingles democratically with passages of polished recollection and impeccably composed social history. Now that the first of several posthumous volumes has appeared, we can take up this history where it left off, at the end of *A Prelude*.

THE inexhaustible Leon Edel (he is preparing a four-volume edition of the letters of Henry James as well) was appointed by Wilson to be his literary executor, and there could have been no better choice than the author of one of the principal literary biographies of our time. If there is any single important fault in Edel's five-volume life of Henry James, it is in his overly Freudian approach to James's family relations; and this tendency to dwell on childhood experience mars what is otherwise a masterly

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portrait of Wilson. For those familiar with *A Prelude*, much of what Edel has to say in his introduction about Wilson's father will seem rather speculative, a too classic instance of rejection by a remote and troubled figure. Moreover, there is always the danger of condescension in such accounts, especially with a subject like Wilson, whose work was devoted to socializing the interior life of the artist, dramatizing its public background. (He once noted that Taine had been his earliest model.)

Edel is surely right to concentrate on the myth of Philoctetes which Wilson popularized in his famous essay, "The Wound and the Bow," here made to serve as the titles of his two-part introduction. Having emphasized "the Wound," symbolic of the psychic trauma of separateness all writers experience (and a favorite theme in his biography of James), Edel turns to "the Bow," Wilson's chosen emblem of the artist's craft, coveted by society while its creator is ostracized and feared. Ingeniously, he identifies Wilson not with Philoctetes himself, but with Neoptolemus, the youth sent to steal the archer's bow, who becomes converted to Philoctetes, a collaborator in his exile. For Edel, Neoptolemus is "the archetypal critic," an agent of mediation who "reflects, even more than the archer, the image and vocation of Edmund Wilson." In reading "The Wound and the Bow" as a concealed autobiography, Edel discovers "the Edmund Wilson whose wound prevented him from being poet, playwright, novelist on the scale of his contemporaries," and whose vocation of critic was his "particular bow, the one right instrument created by the necessities of his particular life experience."

That Wilson was unwilling to relinquish entirely the creative arsenal of Philoctetes is apparent in these notebooks, which are largely devoted to various exercises in rendering landscapes, character, dialogue: in brief, the lineaments of the novel. There is a great deal of nature description in the manner of Wordsworth and Hopkins, not all of it particularly striking. He was essentially urban in temperament, and at his best when evoking the qualities of New York in the 20's, the speakeasies, Washington Square and Greenwich Village, the experience of riding through Central Park in the horse-drawn carriages that now stand idle in front of the Plaza. There are fine vignettes about the circles he traveled in, which consisted not only of writers, but a whole assortment of bibulous, manic, unhappy people who would have remained forever anonymous had it not been for their appearance in the pages of these notebooks. Occasionally, we have a glimpse of celebrities about whom too much has been written, like the Algonquin Round Table and the Fitzgeralds, here treated with the casualness and even disrespect of a contemporary to whom they were simply friends. Dos Passos and Edna St. Vincent Millay are shown much as they appear in Wilson's novel, *I Thought of Daisy*, but his portraits of Scott and Zelda will no doubt be read with great curiosity in this time of obsession with their lives.

Yet the absence of sustained portrayal is often disappointing, a demonstration of Edel's remark that Wilson was "incapable of writing a long and meditated work." It would be unfair to level such complaints against what are, after all, only the notebooks of a brilliant writer (who in fact did produce a number of book-length studies, not least among them *Axel's Castle*, *To the Finland Station*, and *Patriotic Gore*); except that some of what is offered in these pages appears to far better advantage elsewhere in Wilson's writings. For example, we are given many pages of notes on a working-class mistress of his to whom he devoted the longest chapter, nearly a novel in itself, of *Memoirs of Hecate County*; and some of the material on Edna St. Vincent Millay is to be found both in a memoir included in *The Shores of Light* and, fictionalized, in *I Thought of Daisy*. Of course, it has to be remembered that these are the writings of a comparatively young man, and haven't the more formal shape he was able to give *A Prelude* before he died. (Those earlier notebooks possess the added charm of naiveté; the notebooks of the 20's show him to have become rather alarmingly callow in his observations and relationships.) And yet, one ends up longing for the vivid stretches of narrative that distinguish *Europe Without Baedeker* or *Travels in Two Worlds*.

Since we are in a period of unprecedented revelations about the private lives of public figures, the many passages dealing explicitly with sex will probably not seem too shocking, unless one's image of Wilson is drawn from the patrician austerity of his later work. Edel claims, in his gloss of these episodes, that Wilson preceded D. H. Lawrence in attempting "to set down the realities of erotic experience." It could be objected that Lawrence's treatment of sexuality occurs within the design of a fictional work, while Wilson's is in the form of unfinished sketches; still, what the notebooks do establish, and with great originality, is that while there have been significant developments in the literary depiction of sexual relations since the 1920's, there have been virtually none in those relations themselves. We tend to think of our present period as a particularly decadent one, consecrated to some post-modern sensibility intent on self-liberation. In truth, as Wilson's panoramic view of the 20's demonstrates, infidelities, divorce, bizarre sexual proclivities are by no means the invention or discovery of the present age. The fabric of social life seems only more worn half a century later; certainly its pattern is familiar.

One thing Wilson could do better than anyone was express a complicated idea simply, and it is in the practice of this gift that the notebooks have their most rewarding moments. Meditating on the impulses that provoke a work of literature, he noted: "The whole literary and artistic process is merely the type of all human activity, which tends inevitably toward the ordering of the disorderly, the harmonizing of the inharmonious, the decoration of the graceless." Elsewhere, it is

> merely the result of our rude collisions with reality, whose repercussions, when we have withdrawn into the shelter of ourselves, we try to explain, justify, harmonize, spin into an orderly

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pattern in the smooth resuming current of a thought which for a moment has been shattered and torn by them—for even the highest excitement of imaginative vision *is* a state of reflection and detachment.

To reverse Eliot's axiom about Henry James, that "He had a mind so fine no idea could violate it," one could say Wilson had a mind so capacious it could assimilate any idea without violating it. His chapter in *Axel's Castle* on Valéry, or the presentation of dialectical materialism in *To the Finland Station*, recapitulate with grace and simplicity ideas which would otherwise have seemed intimidating. In the notebooks, we can see this method actively at work, and always directed to some immediate purpose, whether it is the understanding of a literary period or the desire to know how literature enacts a writer's lived experience.

Still, one shouldn't be too solemn about these notebooks, which veer uncertainly between the casual, episodic entries of a diarist and the higher concerns of a distinguished literary figure. So great was Wilson's versatility that he could discuss Whitehead on one page, and on the next introduce a hilarious song about dogs composed in collaboration with F. Scott Fitzgerald:

> Dog, dog—I like a good dog!
> Rover or Fido or Spot—
> Clean sort of pleasure—
> A four-footed treasure—
> And loyal as humans are not!

Sometimes he would entertain fanciful Utopian visions,

> impatient for the day when, controlling gravitation as he now controls electricity, mankind, harnessing the worlds, shall drive them around the heavens, master of the solar system and eventually of the whole universe. . . . He will understand everything and have no need of the records of science; and, as he flies, he will naturally and without agonizing his brain sing songs which will make the poetry of Dante and the music of Beethoven seem like the stammering of barbarians.

While waiting for this epoch to arrive, Edmund Wilson was, like everyone else, confined to the realm of human history, a world that often seemed to him "too small, its phenomena too petty and imperfect." Out of the restlessness that has always irritated artists into producing works capable of transcending such natural limits, Wilson fashioned another world, the world that appears in these notebooks. By turns euphoric, vulgar, and nihilistic, this world of the 20's was considerably less genteel than the world of the turn of the century portrayed in Santayana's *People and Places*. Yet their worlds had much in common, not least a cultural tradition for their genius to compete with and exceed. They both possessed independent minds that were nonetheless characteristic of the era that produced them. Somewhere Wilson compares a writer's notes to "the instinctive defensive or predatory gestures of the lowest forms of life." Perhaps, but they are also the record of an evolving sensibility that will always bear, like a fossil, the traces of its origins.

Moneymen

THE BANKERS. By MARTIN MAYER. *Weybright and Talley. 566 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by A.J. SHERMAN

IF, as we are still on occasion told, war is too serious to leave to generals, banking, Mr. Mayer suggests in his disquieting and important study, has become far too serious to leave entirely to bankers, whose collective role as prime movers in the economy is vast, growing rapidly, and remains largely unknown to a public profoundly affected by their decisions.

There has in fact been a revolu-

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tion in banking within the past decade, one that has enabled banks to exert an increasing influence on the money supply, and therefore on the level of prices in this country, and has established national and international credit markets, linked by enormously sophisticated communications networks, that threaten to escape altogether the relatively puny supervisory efforts of governments and regulatory agencies. This man-made revolution, a product of technological advances on an unprecedented scale and the influx of intelligent and eager business-school graduates into higher banking echelons, is characterized by stock market-oriented banks aggressively expanding into risky but profitable fields remote from traditional banking, usually through the device of selling themselves to their own holding companies, which in their turn own and operate such businesses as real estate, leasing and factoring companies, often across state and even national boundaries. Bagehot's dictum that "adventure is the life of commerce, but caution, I had almost said timidity, is the life of banking" has been jettisoned along with much else of traditional banking wisdom in the indiscriminate lemming-like pursuit of "performance" at all costs, defined in terms of increasing the prices for bank shares rather than insuring the collectibility of loans or the stability of deposits.

Mr. Mayer amply demonstrates that the dimensions of the banking revolution are imperfectly grasped by bankers themselves, let alone legislators and the public at large; the purpose of his impressively researched, clearly written analysis is to anatomize that revolution and make its implications comprehensible to laymen as well as specialists. In this ambitious aim, despite a wealth of often fascinating, occasionally chatty detail, he is only partially successful, perhaps inevitably: there surely cannot be many readers who will entirely follow his perforce technical discussions of Federal Reserve operations or the Eurodollar market, nor will everyone relish being taken behind the scenes to observe the complex fate of checks drawn on Mr. Mayer's personal account, or the arcane rituals of trading in federal funds. That some readers may weary of these subjects is a pity, not merely because Mr. Mayer describes them with knowledgeable enthusiasm and a sharp eye for human detail, but also because he convincingly argues that discussion of these technical and esoteric matters leads inevitably to a consideration of crucial problems at the very center of national policy.

This book is in fact a carefully constructed argument that proceeds from a detailed description of how to start a bank to an analysis of banking operations, including the sources and employment of funds. In his discussion of lending practices and the sometimes far from subtle pressures on bank lending officers, we are shown how such fiascos as the Penn Central and Franklin National collapses occurred, and given disturbing evidence of the terrifying insouciance with which some of the biggest banks compiled their frequently appalling loan records of the past several years, often taking indefensible gambler's risks in the hope of recouping earlier losses. The explosive growth of term loans—loans unsecured by collateral, payable out of cash flow that often enough fails to materialize—has meant that some banks have in effect become creatures of their own borrowers, compelled to keep "rolling over" loans as they mature rather than push such shaky debtors as real-estate companies into bankruptcy. Uncollectible term loans on bank books now amount to billions of dollars, Mr. Mayer charges.

Going on to analyze the pernicious influence of stock-market performance on managerial judgment, Mr. Mayer describes the almost overwhelming incentive to maximize short-term profits by indulging in "creative-accounting" practices that distort earning, thus misleading shareholders, security analysts, and often regulatory agencies as well; the notion that "accounting is a way to tell the truth" has become as quaintly obsolete to the nimble-witted new breed of bankers as the steel-tipped pens and hand-posted ledgers of their predecessors.

The growth mania that has swept banks far from the familiar guidelines of elementary banking prudence has also, Mr. Mayer tells us, enabled the banks to damage the economy by artificially swelling business and individual demand for loans, thus undercutting the Federal Reserve System's attempts at restraining inflationary pressures, and helping to push interest rates to their recent record levels. The banks have fueled the enormous growth in their loan business by avidly borrowing from other banks, the public, and a Eurodollar market unregulated by United States or other authorities, whose sheer size and volatility are menacing in themselves. Nobody knows the precise dimensions of the Eurodollar market: what is certain is the tremendous speed with which billions are transferred from one jurisdiction to another, often overnight, to take advantage of minute fluctuations in interest rates and to balance bank books for cosmetic purposes. If some day the music stops in this market, holders of perhaps as much as $250 billion in paper will be looking to someone, somewhere for repayment; very few believe the world financial system as we know it could survive that day.

It is in considering the international aspects of the banking revolution that Mr. Mayer demonstrates most vividly how the vastly improved technology of banking—the sheer ability to move enormous sums of money at high velocity—has become the fuel for the hyperinflation that has swept the world in the past several years, with profound political consequences. In almost prophetic language the author concludes that "greed, curiosity, and pride join to push the best people in the system toward maximum exploitation of the emerging technology, with the Devil to take the hindmost: we have seen the phenomenon elsewhere."

Indeed we have; and Mr. Mayer's tentative prescription for solutions acknowledges that our problems were not created by bankers and cannot be resolved exclusively by them. He insists nevertheless that it is high time for the Federal Reserve and other government authorities to reassert their influence

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over the banking system: the risk of a few more bank failures now is nothing compared with the horrendous prospect we face if present trends continue unchecked. Moreover, we must all—Congress, the administration, the public—face the unpalatable ancient truth that what we purchase collectively must ultimately be paid for, just like those goods and services we purchase as individuals; and that we cannot continue simultaneously to improve the quality of life, extend technology to its ultimate limits, increase the real income of every individual member of society, without paying some price. Mr. Mayer is justifiably not sanguine about our chances of avoiding economic disaster over the next decade: even if the Federal Reserve and Congress display a degree of moral courage and sagacity they have until now signally failed to do, most of the world's savings over the next few years will still flow to the oil-producing countries, whose employment of these gigantic assets has thus far been notoriously unconstructive.

Mr. Mayer's analysis thus leads at last to a consideration of those essentially moral dilemmas that are implied in political choices for a country whose economic resources are vast but nonetheless finite. That a book about banking should arrive at these key issues is a mark of its seriousness and importance, as well as an indication of the centrality of banks in our economy and society.

Devil Worship

EUROPE'S INNER DEMONS: AN ENQUIRY INSPIRED BY THE GREAT WITCH HUNT. By NORMAN COHN. *Basic Books. 302 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by GERALD STRAUSS

TO BE against Norman Cohn is to speak up for sin. No other recent scholar has been as resourceful as he in the attempt to expose, and by exposing eliminate, ignorance, prejudice, intolerance, and hysteria from our society. In *The Pursuit of the Millennium,* the book which established his reputation when it was published in 1957, Professor Cohn sought to uncover the medieval roots of the fanaticism supplying the drive of 20th-century totalitarian movements. The prompt and lasting response to this work indicates that he had struck a nerve. His second book, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (1967), assembled into a spellbinding tale the pieces of one of the most pernicious of modern mass delusions. Now, in his latest study, he returns to the Middle Ages, still eager to demonstrate the damage done to the innocent by superstition and paranoia in high and low places. *Europe's Inner Demons* reconstructs the web of warped perceptions which made possible the disgraceful witch hunts of the 16th and 17th centuries. In the manner

GERALD STRAUSS *is professor of history at Indiana University and the author of, among other works,* Historian in an Age of Crisis *and* Nuremberg in the Sixteenth Century.

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of his earlier volumes it combines skillful detective work with a broad paradigm intending to explain what happened, and why. Like the others, it is wholly admirable in its controlled outrage at those who inflict injustice, and its sympathy with those who suffer it. As one of the "Studies in the Dynamics of Persecution and Extermination" sponsored by the Columbus Center at the University of Sussex, for which Professor Cohn is general editor, the book is, again like its predecessors, resolutely present-minded. The destructive urges of our own society sound a constant undertone to the events of the past. Whether or not this is a good thing depends on the purpose for which one reads the book.

Professor Cohn's rather casual way with the immensely complex facts of medieval religious movements has not gone uncensured by the experts. Nor has it escaped their notice that he tends to force his thesis on events. Worse, his dominant concern with the persecutions of our own day and his preoccupation with hysteria and obsession often tempt him into sensationalizing his material. In the case of *The Pursuit of the Millennium* it has been noted that the most extreme evidence contained in his sources seems always the most credible to him. This is also true of *Europe's Inner Demons*. It is the inevitable consequence of pressing the modern parallels of historical phenomena. Professor Cohn insists on these parallels. Both *Millennium* and *Demons* illustrate, he says in the preface to the latter, "the urge to purify the world through the annihilation of some category of human beings imagined as agents of corruption and incarnations of evil. . . . What is more, it is with us still; and in the minds of some readers this book, like its predecessor, will prompt reflections not only about the distant past, but about certain aspects of 20th-century history too." Such a perspective, however, as every historian knows, is likely to distort.

IN *Europe's Inner Demons* Professor Cohn investigates the origins and transmission of what he calls "the fantasy" about witches: the delusion "that there existed, somewhere in the midst of the great society, another society, small and clandestine, which not only threatened the existence of the great society, but was also addicted to practices which were felt to be wholly abominable in the sense of anti-human." This fantasy is composed of four distinct notions: there are persons who practice *maleficium* (i.e., injure others by occult means); there are persons who have bound themselves to the Devil; some people—mostly women—fly through the air to nighttime rendezvous where they do horrible and disgusting things; there is a secret society of such people.

How, when, and why did these originally separate notions come together to form the stereotype of the witch? The juncture occurred, Professor Cohn thinks, in the 15th and early 16th centuries when inquisitors and other ecclesiastical officials, as well as secular magistrates, combined traditional popular notions about weird beings and powers into one integrated image of the witch as a member of a Devil-worshipping, night-flying, cannibalistic, and orgiastic sect bent on undermining Christian society. Evidence for the existence of such a sect came from witch trials. It was extracted from people, mostly women, many of whom genuinely believed themselves capable of working spells, receiving demon incubi, and flying through the air. By themselves these guileless self-delusions would never have generated large-scale witch hunts had they not been fused in the twisted minds of their inquisitorial prosecutors with fantasies about the power and fascination of Satan, about sexual orgies enjoyed at sabbaths and synagogues, and about infanticide and the eating of baby flesh. Thus the great witch scare of the 16th and 17th centuries was the product of an amalgamation of folk superstitions with the bizarre religious hallucinations of educated and influential men who conducted the trials and wrote the books. The whole story is, Professor Cohn says, "a supreme example of a massive killing of innocent people by a bureaucracy acting in accordance with beliefs which . . . had come to be taken for granted, as self-evident truths."

This summary does less than justice to Professor Cohn's presentation, which contains many good things, particularly in the early chapters where he demonstrates the inadequacy of older theories of witchcraft, and where he traces the development through time of the separate elements of the ultimate witch fantasy. It is in his attempt to supply an explanatory paradigm that Professor Cohn fails to make himself credible. For one thing, he is not able to connect convincingly the disparate components of the witch fantasy into its final composition in the late 15th century. As a speculative reconstruction of a process by which the witch craze might have been generated, the book has much interest. As a paradigm it has little force. For another thing, he does not always keep his argument under tight control. He melodramatizes, as he repeats with evident relish the scabrous and largely fictitious tales about the activities of witches. He can be as willful in interpreting his evidence as some of the older scholars whose hypotheses he attacks. He accepts source testimony when it suits him, rejects it when it doesn't. For instance, it is essential to his argument that many people actually believed that they could do the things with which their accusers charged them. But his proof texts are open to many questions. Some are ambiguous; others relate to witchcraft in Africa and, even if credible in themselves, belong to a different context; still others depend on recent attempts to reexperience witch fantasies with the aid of psychedelic drugs. Much of this won't wash.

BUT the real flaw of Professor Cohn's book lies elsewhere, in the underlying sentiments which make the argument itself, and the conclusions to be drawn from it, more important for him than the evidence. Professor Cohn has revived the sensationalizing approach of such rationalist scholars as the older Soldan, Hansen, Paulus, and the recent Trevor-Roper. These men saw in witchcraft and its persecution only the mental detritus of a dark age in Europe when supersti-

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tion and credulity produced a febrile mood in which mass hysteria lay always just beneath the surface.

The historiography of witchcraft has moved a long way from this approach. Recent scholarship is low-keyed in its attitude to phenomena. It proceeds from the concerns of social historians and anthropologists. It tends to see the presence of witchcraft, and also the opposition to it, as integral parts of rural and town life in medieval and early modern Europe. Most of the witching business was rather unexciting. The great hunts and trials need to be explained, of course. But if they are to be understood at all, this can be done only against the background of the altogether ordinary role witchcraft played in daily life in the villages and towns.

Professor Cohn is of course aware of recent research. But I suspect it is not of much interest to him. He is after deeper things than village conjurers and cunning women. In a revealing postscript entitled "Psychohistorical Speculations" he suggests what he suspects may ultimately explain all medieval and modern Satanic fantasies. The witch stereotype Europeans created for themselves embodied, he says, "their innermost selves—their obsessive fears and also their terrifying desires." These are the "inner demons" of Professor Cohn's title: the suppressed tendency to cannibalistic infanticide deeply embedded in infantile fantasies as projected onto parents, in parents' secret wishes to destroy their offspring, and in sibling rivalry; also repressed erotic drives surfacing as dream visions of orgiastic rites presided over by the Devil in the shape of a goat. Cohn thinks that beneath all these fantasies may be an unconscious resentment against Christianity as a strict religion and against Christ as a stern taskmaster. However that may be (in point of fact the evidence of 16th- and 17th-century Catholic and Protestant visitation records shows clearly that most people paid very little attention to Christian ethics), our inner demons give us no peace until we have projected them onto innocent and defenseless fellow creatures who by being persecuted allow us to exorcise, or at least

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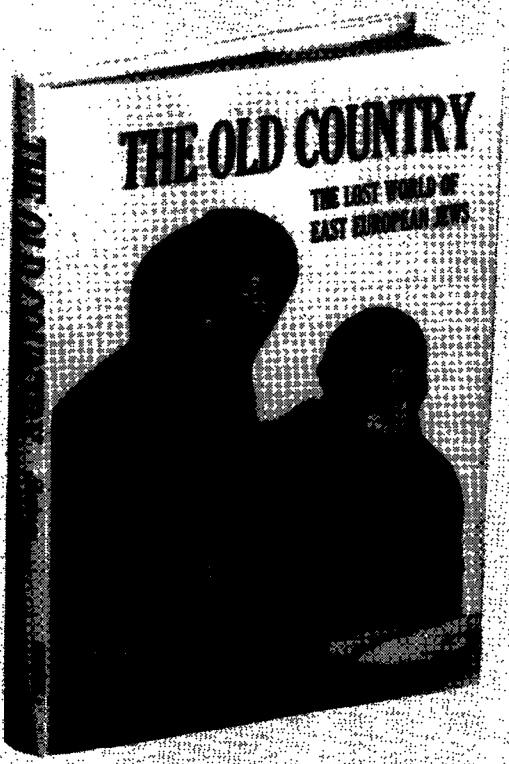

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tolerate, our horrifying secret obsessions.

Such a hypothesis, if generally accepted, would once again demonize the study of witchcraft. But it is to be hoped that it will not do so. Like witchcraft studies, psychohistory has emerged from its early simplistic phase; the crude Freudian model that used to hold it captive is no longer respectable. Everyone is still fascinated by the reconstructions of psychohistorians, but their views now hold only limited appeal for social historians who work with more flexible hypotheses and more objective methods. The next decade is likely to see much interesting work done to illuminate the still obscure chapters in the history of witchcraft and demonology. Professor Cohn's study is out of tune with this sober scholarly enterprise, although I have no doubt that much of it will be duller to read than his provocative, and provoking, new book.

In Defense of Reason

PRAGMATISM AND THE TRAGIC SENSE OF LIFE. By SIDNEY HOOK. *Basic Books. 224 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL NOVAK

For as long as I can remember I have read Sidney Hook's books and articles fairly systematically. Perhaps the first I read was one of the essays here collected, "The Moral Vision of Reinhold Niebuhr" (1956). I was graduating from college then and, full of the fervor of a Catholic undergraduate, I wanted to learn from a major American philosophical figure who was unafraid to take on current social issues, in the mold of John Dewey or Jacques Maritain. Sidney Hook's interest in religious figures made him perfect for my purposes. His comments on Jean-Paul Sartre, Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, Eliseo Vivas, Michael Polanyi, and others (collected in this book), provided me with a kind of compass in the exploration of unknown and vaguely threatening territory, "the American secular philosophical world." I thought of Hook as my favorite atheist, my paradigmatic secular, anti-religious figure.

In recent years, Hook has become a conservative figure in the public mind, but I had looked to him in those early days as a symbol of all that was solid, progressive, enlightened, and right-minded in American social thought, the heir to Dewey and a central participant in (as I saw it) the New York Left. To my knowledge then, most American thinkers who knew the socialist democratic traditions lived in New York and were Jewish; it appeared to me to be the normative culture, with a complicated urban and psychological flavor that was exciting and made me feel in part at home and in part alive to a sense of difference and danger. I had no clear idea what a Trotskyite was, but it sounded like a delicious deviance, after all; and names used as tokens in learned articles—Bakunin, Gletkin, Kornilov, Bukharin, and the rest—suggested a dense jungle of intellectual work I would one day have to hack through. Naively, I say, coming from a wholly different intellectual world, I thought Hook was a buoy on the Left, who would always mark out the limits of a sensible, astringent, and enlightened progress.

Imagine my surprise, then, in the sunny California days of 1965-68, when I found myself writing *A Theology for Radical Politics* and drifting far out in open seas while Hook remained anchored firm. By this time, I had come to be dissatisfied with the "liberalism" and "secularism" in American intellectual life represented by Hook. He takes note of others like myself in the title essay of this book, not quite as sensitively as I would like: "It is now an almost unchallenged commonplace that pragmatism is a superficial philosophy of optimism, of uncritical adjustment and conformity, of worship of the goddess success." Pragmatism, he adds a little heavily, "was cried down as the typical philosophy of a parvenu people, insensitive to tradition and culture, and devoted only to the invention of machines . . . by human beings who acted as if they were themselves only complicated machines." In his introduction, Hook slightly overstates another of my negative impressions, ". . . the rationalist is pictured as a man without feeling, taste, emotion. . . . 'Reason' is interpreted not as the manifestation of 'the reasonable' but as the purely ratiocinative . . . by identifying the life of reason . . . with the enterprise of technical scientific inquiry. . . ."

These criticisms of his point of view he does not, as I say, reproduce precisely. But by 1960 many younger students of philosophy were, indeed, quite restless. In order to make room for the religious sensibility, in order to defend a respect for human history and complexity, in order to uphold an almost Burkean sense of the organic, I for one wanted help against the arid analysis offered in the universities. Revolt seemed nowhere near in 1961, but some new movement seemed to be the only way to open up the secular scholasticism I encountered in the Harvard philosophy department. Tillich was made to feel so unwelcome there that he soon left for Chicago; Henry David Aiken, newly working in Continental existentialism, moved to Brandeis.

Sidney Hook, all the while, as the present book demonstrates, was trying to show that the mainline tradition of pragmatism did not call for radical revolt. It was not a dessicated method; it already imagined philosophies as "different ways of construing life" (Dewey). Pragmatism, he was arguing, did respect the pluralism of the world, its concrete traditions and historical streams; it did recognize that choice was almost always between two goods, and therefore tragic; it did ground itself in "a recognition of the tragic sense of life."

Polemics, especially among professors, almost always mislead. Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich, for example, advanced points against Hook and Dewey which it is now plain that Hook himself (and Dewey, too) already held, in their own fashion. And Hook's counterattacks, printed here, seem in mellow rereading to have been more conciliatory, less antagonistic, than they did at the time. What is it about controversy in print that appears to

MICHAEL NOVAK *is the author of, among other works,* The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics, Belief and Unbelief, *and* Choosing Our King.

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emphasize distances? Difference, I suppose, is the pen's spur; agreement makes one merely nod.

But there is more to it than that. Intellectual traditions generate their own vocabularies, concepts, connotative powers, and rhetorical enemies. If there is a failing in Hook, it is some failing of sensibility: he finds it hard to feel himself into the intellectual horizon of others. He is generous enough about attributing good intentions, fair in reporting what others actually say. But he is so wrapped up in his own horizon that he cannot feel the force of their arguments, and as a result he often evinces irritation at their own lack of perspicacity.

Thus, of Tillich he writes: "One feels that refuting him is like punching on eiderdown or fencing with a ghost. There is no sense of resistance. On the many occasions on which I have polemicized against him, with my usual mildness and restraint, he has always replied with manifest sincerity, 'I agree with everything you have said.' . . ." Hook was never able to penetrate the language of "being" in whose tradition Tillich reveled; he could not follow its distinctions, or detect the experiential referents from which each word in that vocabulary drew its tenuous but felt life. Watching Hook deal with a word like "being" was, indeed, like watching a pillow fight in which one protagonist is blindfolded. "It may be," Hook writes as he tires, "that I am too literal-minded and old-fashioned, prepared to pay too high a price for clarity." It would be truer to say that in different horizons there are different rules for clarity, different literal meanings, different ways of being old-fashioned. (Ironically, by the way, Niebuhr had as much trouble with Tillich's "being" as Hook did.)

When writers agree with Hook, of course, he is able to enter their world and make translation easily. Here is Hook's secular rendering of Niebuhr's "conception of man":

> It is a conception which is sound, noble, and profound, one which fits man for the uses of war and peace, change and struggle. And there is not a thought in it which is foreign or new to an unillusioned naturalism. After all, it is not dogmatic belief or revelation but the scientific and experimental temper which illustrates in a preeminent way that humility, tentativeness, scrupulousness, openness to new horizons, combined with vigor of decision and of action in securing the next steps, that Niebuhr himself recommends as necessary to a good life. The imperialistic ontologies and absolutism Niebuhr fears do not dog empirical inquiry, which forbids nothing to be and asks only for adequate evidence to undergird belief. Niebuhr's strictures against the classic theory of pure human reason are certainly justified, but they were made long before him by Hobbes and Hume, by James and Dewey, for whom intelligence is not pure but related to passion and need yet capable of establishing relative objective truths. . . .

In other essays in this book, in "The Quest for Certainty—Existentialism Without Tears," in "The Place of Reason in an Age of Conflict," in "Philosophy And/Or Agony," and in "In Defense of the Enlightenment," Hook rounds out his defense of a sober American naturalism by his criticisms of Michael Polanyi, Eliseo Vivas, such diverse European critics of reason as Martin Luther, David Hume, Bertrand Russell, and "the existentialists." (These last are mostly unnamed and unquoted; they are attacked through a tendentious summary of "a library of existentialist literature in four propositions.") There are some marvelous sentences in these essays, and the viewpoint is a sane and often untechnical, unprofessionalized one: "Reason is not so much *reasoning* as it is good sense, and like a sense of tact or humor it has as deep a root in our genetic structure as in our learned behavior." Their feel is American, in a now old-fashioned way, as when Hook gives William James's reply to the somber European question, "Does life have a meaning?" "It all depends on the liver." (This pun was first French —*"C'est une question de foie"*—but it would have pleased Mark Twain, Will Rogers, Robert Ingersoll.)

WHY, then, does one set this collection of thirteen essays aside with faint dissatisfaction? Ironically, this at once mild and stern man, a lifelong enemy of fanaticism, a despiser of dogmatism, a celebrator of openness and pluralism and variety, has a certain narrow range of sympathies. In recent years, his defense of academic freedom and intellectual excellence has made him into a kind of *Defensor Fidei*, the Protector of a Holy Grail, the champion of a sort of orthodoxy—even though it be of an experimental, reasonable, adjudicable sort. It sometimes seems to me that traditional liberals and intellectual Catholics have changed symbolic places: the latter now are all for "open doors" of every sort, to the point it sometimes seems of vacuity, while the former fight bravely for a tradition in danger of being lost, assuming in vintage years the defensive posture they once enjoyed attacking, when heresy rode in the saddle with them.

Life, indeed, has held a tragic sense for pragmatists of the classic age, and it has asked of them a virtue seldom asked of philosophers, except under totalitarian regimes: courage. Hook has shown himself, in days when moral bravery has not been in abundance, brave. And this, in the end, may be the most important thing to say of him.

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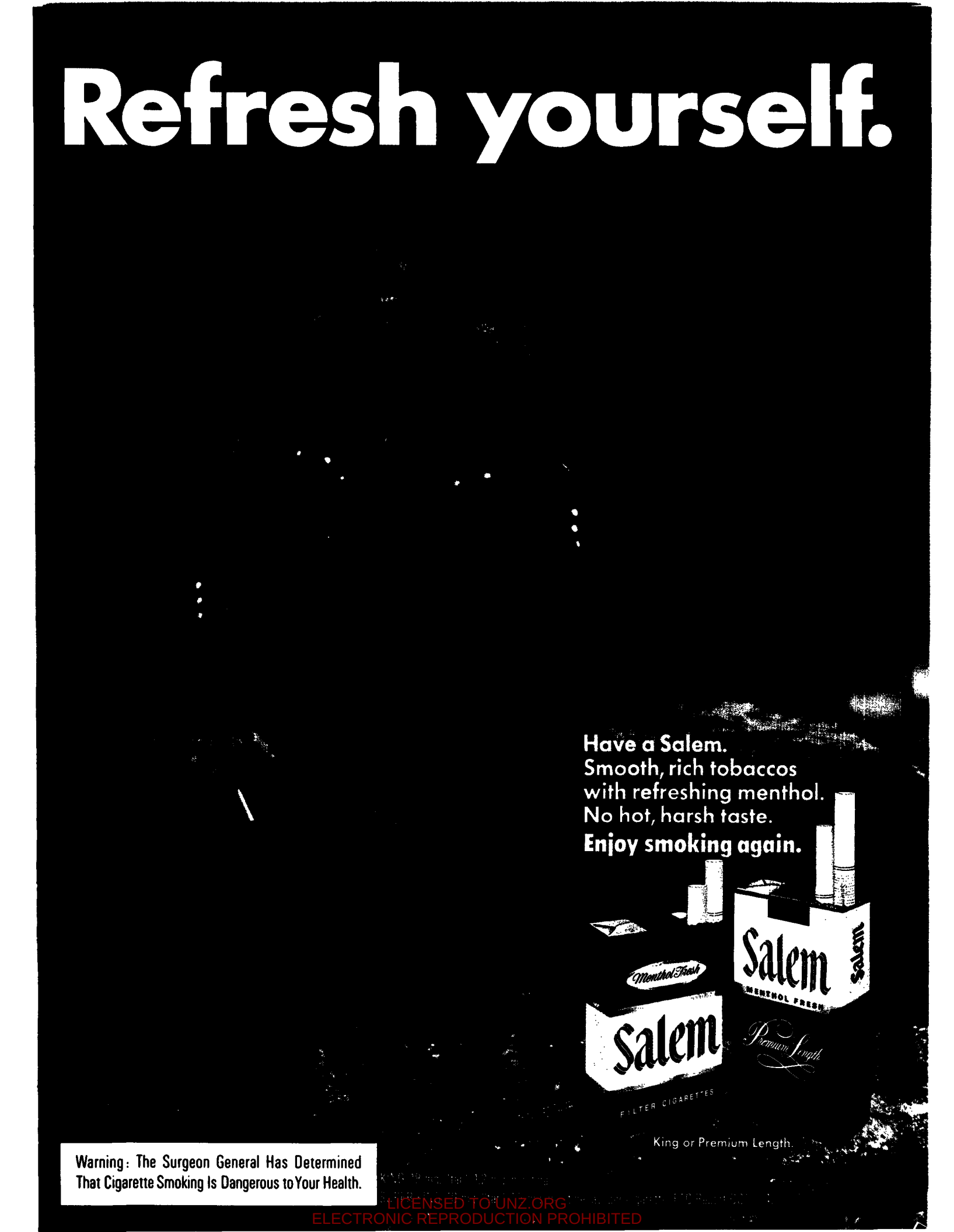

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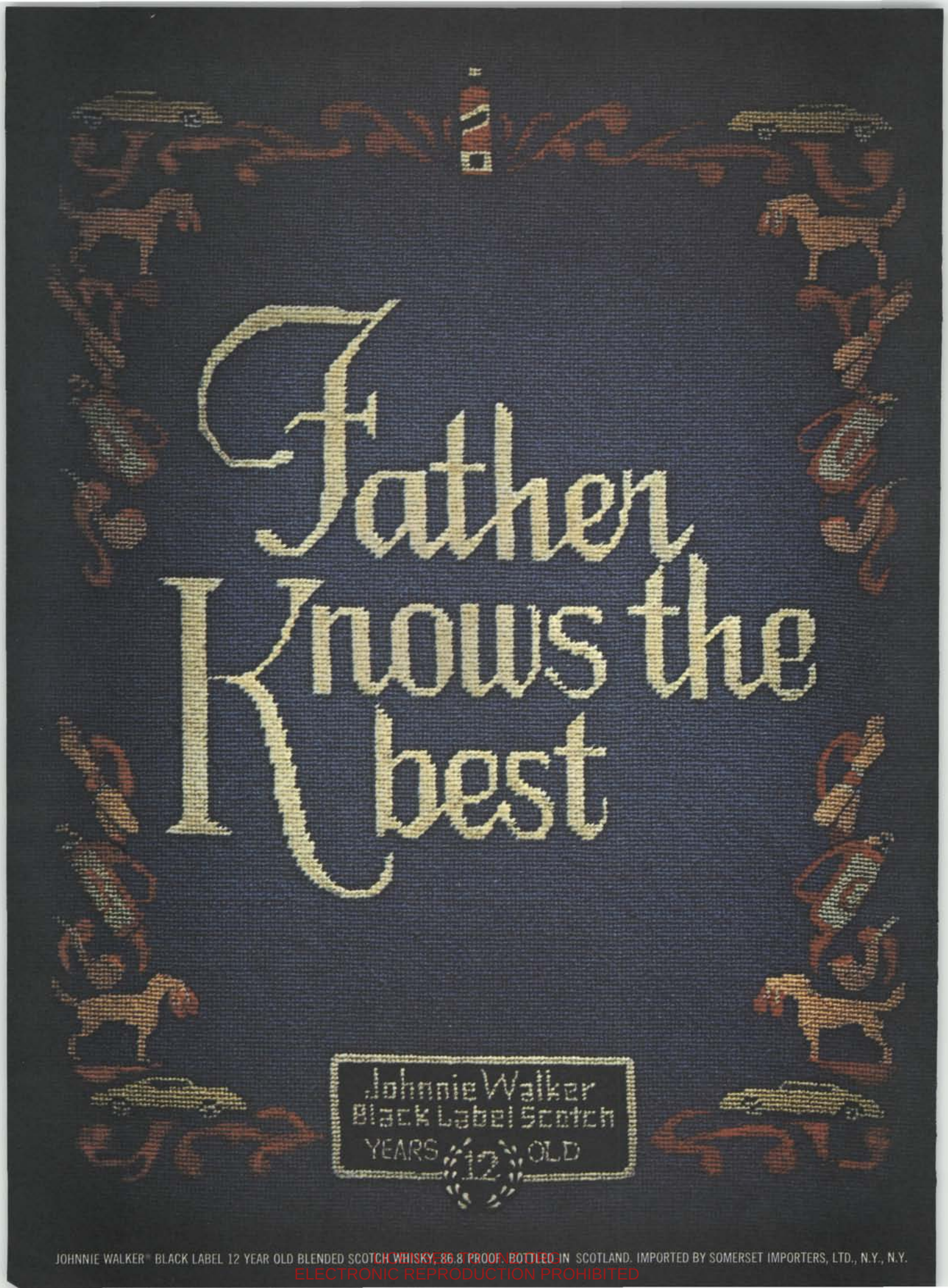

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